

**The Didima Rock Art Centre:
a critical evaluation of the intersections of tourism,
heritage conservation, and visual communication.**

By

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Declaration

This dissertation is the unaided work of the candidate. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

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Prefatory Note

Research for this dissertation included personal communication with various members of Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife, private researchers, and employees of the Natal Museum between February of 2003 and October of 2004. This took place in interviews by means of structured questionnaires and by telephonic communication where an interview was not possible. These are noted in the text as personal communication (pc) in the referencing format.

The Bushmen have no collective name for themselves in any of their languages that would cover the many Bushman groups, because each has its own language. Following researchers such as David Lewis-Williams, I use the word ‘San’, or ‘Southern San’ in referring to the Bushmen of the Drakensberg. (The term ‘San’ was historically applied to Bushmen by their ethnic relatives and historic rivals, the Khoikhoi. This term means *outsider* in the Khoikhoi language and was derogatory.) Opinions vary on whether the term ‘Bushman’ is appropriate as it conjures various derogatory thoughts associated to the Bushmen over time, including that of the wild savage or of simple people. As Lewis-Williams does, I reject any pejorative connotations associated with either word.

The following procedures have been adopted:

1. The Harvard System of referencing and bibliographic citation has been used. In referencing, the name of the author appears only if it is not used in the same sentence in which it appears.
2. The bibliography appears after the glossary. This includes texts that are cited and those not referred to directly, but which have been important in informing opinions in the text. The bibliography has been separated into books, journals, theses, conference papers, magazine articles, brochures, unpublished papers, dictionaries, and websites. The titles of books appear in italics within the body of the text.
3. A glossary of technical terms that are used in the body of the text appears at the end of the text. References accompany the meaning of the terms.
4. Illustrations are indicated in the text by referring to the figure number. A list of illustrations appears after the text. The titles of the illustrations appear in italics. Where possible the artist has been cited, but it was not always possible as a number of people worked on the projects illustrated. The dimensions of the photographs

taken of rock art have been excluded as they are not an indication of the dimensions of the actual rock art.

Abstract

This dissertation critically evaluates the intersections of tourism, heritage conservation, and visual communication by exploring the display materials and Museology within the Didima Rock Art Centre, at Cathedral Peak, southern Drakensberg, KwaZulu-Natal.

The text consists of three chapters. The first chapter introduces rock art and current research and conservation concerns in relation to heritage and rock art.

The second chapter serves as an introduction to the Didima Rock Art Centre. A discussion raises important issues about visual communication in regard to the representation of the Southern San and rock art as material culture both in this museum context.

Chapter three investigates and analyses the museum practices that have been used as a visual communication within the Centre by discussing methods that have been used in the museum and its auditorium.

A conclusion follows that summarizes the candidate's findings regarding museum display within the Centre, and its impact on tourism and heritage conservation in relation to the Southern San and rock art.

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Figure 1.a



Figure 1.b

A long-term commitment to preserving rock art is the answer, a commitment to surveying and conveying message to people of all ages, especially local communities, children and tourists. Rock art is a fragile heritage, an irreplaceable resource that needs to be cherished and preserved for future generations, while at the same time showing respect for indigenous peoples who still regard the art as sacred (Bahn, 1998: 281).



Figure 1.c

Introduction

This dissertation sets out to critically evaluate the intersections of tourism, heritage conservation, and visual communication by exploring the Didima Rock Art Centre, Cathedral Peak, KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg.

The plight of rock art has become a national concern, with the members of many associations joining forces to try to save this South African heritage (Blackmore, pc: 2003). One result of this is the establishment of San rock art interpretive centres, such as the Didima Rock Art Centre. It is hoped that through this Centre, the destruction of rock paintings due to human interference can be reduced through the education and appreciation that the Centre intends to realize through the medium of visual communication.

In particular, the dissertation will focus on methods of display of the San rock art within the Didima Rock Art Centre, and to critique these visual communications. The motivation to research this theme came from the candidate's interest in the discipline of art and museum practice that have stemmed from Fine Arts studies, as well as from developed interest in the conservation of San rock art and anthropology following involvement in the construction of the artificial shelter at the Centre during 2003, when the candidate assisted in the design and modeling of the rock surface of the artificial cave.

The dissertation will firstly investigate and outline a background to the portrayal of the San and their art through disciplines such as art history and archaeology, as well as through popular visual media such as photography, before analyzing the museum display within the Centre.

The text consists of three chapters. Chapter one serves as an introduction to the issues relating to rock art, including a history of conservation concerns and research into rock art.

A short discussion on rock art as an art form will explain the history and marginalisation of rock art from popular art forms. This is followed by a survey of current theories about rock

art, including descriptions of the work of researchers such as David Lewis-Williams, whose work contradicts the Western idea that rock art is a simple art form. This chapter also gives comprehensive insight into the motivation to establish the Didima Rock Art Centre, and the theories and research on which the information and visual artifacts presented within the Centre are based.

The second chapter focuses on the Didima Rock Art Centre itself. Included is a brief outline about the establishment of the Centre, and a summary of the aims and objectives of the Centre. Correlations will be drawn and contested between Aron Mazel's (1981) study on the management of archaeological resources in the KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg, and the choice of information and display techniques that are used within the Centre.

The latter part of chapter two critically explores various factors linked to visual communication that have impact on tourism and heritage conservation outcomes and include issues of authenticity, representation of the San people of themselves, and conflation of the rock art to perceptions of the Southern San. A critical exploration of the notion of the stereotypical 'Bushman' examined by researchers such as Buntman (1995, 1997, 2002), Blundell (1996, 1997) and Skotnes (1996) is used to critique these issues. These findings will be used to underscore the investigation into the Didima Rock Art Centre in chapter three.

The third chapter will give an analysis of the museum practices utilized in the Centre. The museum area and the artificial cave 'theatre'; the two divisions of the Centre are discussed individually regarding museum practice in each instance. The analysis of what is communicated visually will determine whether the intersections of tourism and heritage conservation have been dealt with in a constructive way as to promote the public education of rock art and prevent the reinforcement of popular misconceptions that exist about the San and San rock art.

Chapter One

Rock art: an overview

The San rock art of South Africa is a priceless, non-renewable heritage of scientific and aesthetic value. Furthermore, it is a memorial of the San who are thought to be the earliest inhabitants of South Africa as skeletal remains show that the San had lived in South Africa for at least ten thousand years (Pager, 1975: 16). And, the earliest date determined of a rock painting by radiocarbon technique is as much as 27000 years before the present (Lewis-Williams and Blundell, 1998: 5). Although it is not known exactly how long the San had been painting for, it is evident that their art was the earliest art to be produced in South Africa.

While South Africa is rich with the remains of the pre- agriculturalists, there is no place richer than the Drakensberg Mountains (Hoffman, 1971: 91). The Drakensberg is home to 35 000 San rock art paintings in over 600 different cave art galleries, but although the art is in quantity, it is the maintenance of its diminishing quality that makes its protection a management necessity (Hughes, 2004: 22). It is known that the San¹ were still in the Drakensberg at the time of European and Bantu occupation of the lower Drakensberg regions in the early 1900's as these peoples featured in the late Southern San paintings (Rudner and Rudner, 1970: 155). Figure 2 shows figures on horseback that are clearly not San people.

Although the San groups in the Drakensberg region no longer exist, recent evidence has come to light of San descendants living in the Zulu- and Bantu- speaking communities adjacent to the Drakensberg Park (Hughes, 2004: 22). It was long assumed that the importance of the paintings 'died out' with the disappearance of the San from this region. But it has been discovered that there are still people in these areas who claim that San beliefs have influence on their ritual, and acknowledge that they still have access to San power by visiting the rock art sites (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003).

¹ The names Southern San and Drakensberg San are used in the text in reference to the San of the KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg Mountain region. (See also: Glossary).

Interest in the San once centered on the belief that they were relics of the past, living ‘fossils’, whose way of life would provide clues about the behavior of early humans, and that the paintings were expressions of early behavior. This view is no longer accepted. Though their economy is of great antiquity, San people of today are as ‘modern’ as anyone else as they live in the contemporary world, not in the Stone Age (Solomon, 1998: 13). The San communities of today exist in game reserves and reserved areas in the Northern Cape, Botswana, Namibia, and the Kalahari Sandveld region (Weinberg, 1997: 6). Most of the San people otherwise have been absorbed into other cultures, such as the Bantu and Zulu peoples, and their traditions lost to adopt new ones.

The paintings stand as testimony to the life of the San, what they ate, how they dressed, their simple daily activities, and their belief and value systems (Coulson and Campbell, 2001: 244). Clearly, San rock art should be considered important in South African society as it depicts the life of the earliest known people in South Africa, and is evidence of the earliest known works of art of mankind, hence making it the earliest cultural heritage of our country.

Rock art: art or artifact?

Rock art is not only of anthropological, archaeological, and historical significance, but is an irreplaceable form of art in its own right (Townley-Basset, 2001: 11). It is the most widely distributed art form, spanning the entire world and it is a form of painting that carried on longer than any other (Ritchie, 1979: 11).

Until quite recently, many Westerners thought of rock art as a European derivation that spread into Africa (Coulson and Campbell, 2001: 38). White colonialists especially believed the San to be too ‘primitive’ to have developed artistic capabilities (Lewis-Williams and Dowson, 1989: 4). The idea of ‘primitivism’² was related to the idea that the San people were a different type or species to the ordinary human race.

² For references to the term ‘primitive’ and ‘primitivism’ in the South African context, see essays by Klopper and Nettleton (for example) in *Art and Ambiguity* (1991), *The Aesthetics of Primitive Art* by Gene H. Blocker (1994), and *The Concise Oxford dictionary of Art and Artists*.

The rock art was also believed to serve simply a decorative, or narrative purpose in Southern San society, functioning as art-for-art's-sake (Lewis-Williams, 1988: 1; Pager, 1975: 26). Dorothea Bleek, daughter of Wilhelm Bleek, despite her father's research findings concluded in her book, *Introduction to Rock Paintings of South Africa*, that 'only from love of painting would they ever of painted so much' (Bleek, 1930: xxiv-v in Lewis-Williams, 1996: 310).

Another reason for making art was thought to be for the purpose of sympathetic magic, in which the making of an image gave the artist power over the animal represented (Willecox, 1956: 57; Dowson, 1996: 318 in Skotnes, 1996). For example, during the 1930's in Europe it was thought that 'The mural art of the Spanish Caves and African cliffs was on the contrary, an integrated and essential function of life, for these painted animals were almost certainly magic symbols used to ensure success in hunting of the real animals in prehistoric times: they painted so that the community might eat' (Frobenius and Fox, 1937: 9).

Contrary to the popular belief, depictions of what appear to be hunts are rare in San rock art and their absence is one of the reasons for believing that the art does not only depict a series of scenes from daily life (Blundell and Lewis-Williams, 1998: 13). Pager (1971) found only 29 scenes in a total of 2860 paintings of human beings and animals that could be called hunting scenes (Dowson, 1996: 319 in Skotnes, 1996). In conjunction with ethnographic information, this evidence shows that such explanations for the production of San rock art are marginal.

Too often interpretations reflect one's own milieu than that of the artists, as it is difficult to rid one's self of pre-conceived ideas of one's own culture. The fundamental problem in interpretation is that just because a marking happens to resemble a real object according to our understanding of visual representation, there is no guarantee that the image is meant to depict that object.

Many writers of the 1940's and 1950's up until today still present the art as a somewhat trivial record of daily life and sometimes as an object of fun and amusement (Lewis-Williams, 1996: 311 in Skotnes, 1996). In turn, art history has concerned itself with the reproduction and

reception of visual materials that are considered of exceptional quality, and since rock art is considered 'primitive', it has not been thought of as a high art form (Nethersole, 1995: 1).

Many art historians and art critics do not know how to discuss rock art and rock art in institutions has largely been presented as a curiosity, images that 'stand in contrast to the primitiveness of their makers' (Lewis-Williams and Dowson, 1994: 393). Furthermore, Blundell (1996) points out that rock art is viewed as neither 'African' nor 'European', and has thereby had an ambiguous history in its inclusion in South Africa's art history, leading it to have very little recognition as an African art. This is the result caused by the trivial explanations for San rock art.

While art-for-art's-sake may theoretically have occurred in any culture, many researchers have come to believe that many of the paintings hold meanings other than those of purely utilitarian kind (Bahn, 1998: xi). The detailed iconography of the rock art has come to present a further dimension of humankind (Ouzman, 1998: 30). A great deal of research into San rock art has focused on iconography, that is identifying subject matter and attempting to understand the 'symbolic meanings' held (Solomon, 1999: 127). It has been concluded that through these symbolic meanings, for the San people, rock art is a deliberate communication through visual form and an 'expression of group mentality and an artists inner-world' (Bahn, 1998: xiii).

In most cases, it is thought that individual artistic inspiration was related to some widespread system of thought, and had messages to convey, whether it be signatures, ownership, narratives, myths, or metaphors (Bahn, 1998: xvii). We have been able to catch a glimpse of San beliefs and thoughts through these rock paintings. Rock art researchers, for example David Lewis-Williams (1989) believe that San artists were shamans, anonymous go-betweens that conveyed the decisions of the spirits and visually translated the spirit world to an idiom that their group could understand (Ouzman, 1998: 33). (See³). Through the research done by such people as Lewis-Williams, it has been found that the paintings were of great religious value to the San people.

³ A shaman is defined as 'a person who has instituted altered states of conscious in which the religion specialist, or shaman experiences visual and somatic hallucinations which are said to constitute the central truth's of San religion' (Lewis-Williams, 1989 in Ouzman, 1998: 33).

Westernized perceptions of art do not seem appropriate to describe San rock art. A Western approach to art can use aesthetic and theoretical approaches when looking at the art and describing the beauty and formal qualities, but these do not capture the perceptions and use of images by the San people. Ouzman (1998) states that 'the language that we use to describe art is unable to capture the metaphors, resonance's and textures of San existence'. Just as popular art forms such as photography and painting act as a part of social and cultural practice in the Western world, involving relations of power, interactions, ideological practice, political and ecological factors that construct the values and belief systems of the producer and his or her society, so do the rock paintings of the San people (Buntman, <museums.org.za/sam/conf/enc/buntman.htm>, accessed on 18 August 2003). The Drakensberg San no longer exist in the time and space in which the paintings were produced, making it difficult for 'Western' society to understand.

For example, due to the symbolic importance of the paintings in San society, San artists would often touch and over-paint them, according to ethnographic accounts (Lewis-Williams, 1986). As artists, even though South African, we are influenced by the constructs developed about 'art' as defined by the Western world. The thought would be that the San artists were lazy or disrespectful of the previous artist's work as Western constructs reinforce that an artwork should not be touched once finished, let alone by another artist. But, rock art images were carefully selected and juxtaposed, superimposed, placed in unusual physical settings and articulated within specific social circumstances (Ouzman, 1998: 33). The paintings do not stand individually; they represent a whole, and prove to be far more complex than thought when first discovered.

From this discussion it can be concluded that although rock art is arguably the best known of South Africa's art history, it is at the same time the least understood (Lewis-Williams and Dowson, 1994: 386).

The study of rock art in South Africa: research and the growing realization of the San's 'cognitive ability' and the complexity of the art

The tradition of San rock art is now long dead. We have almost no direct insight into the practice of painting as painting by a San person was not witnessed or documented as such (Solomon, 1998: 268). But, we are fortunate enough to have an enormous amount of ethnographic and historical material that gives insight into San belief, 'illuminated by the memories of a small number of San people that survived the onslaught of colonialism' (Deacon and Deacon, 1999: 194). The study of rock art in South Africa has contributed immensely to the understanding of rock paintings. The sophistication of the Southern San rock paintings in particular and the interpretations of its meanings in the Southern African context has re-inspired the evaluation of rock art in Europe and the America's (Deacon and Deacon, 1999: 195).

The study of rock art began with the growing popularity of the discovery of the art; followed by a genuine concern to document and decipher the art before it disappears. In South Africa, Europeans first noted the discovery of rock art in the mid-eighteenth century while travelling in the drier areas of the Cape, and from the end of the eighteenth century, travelers such as F. le Vaillant and Sir John Barrow began to include drawings of the rock art that they had seen in their books and diaries (Coulson and Campbell, 2001: 38; Rudner, 1989: 1; Ritchie, 1979: 28; Lewis-Williams, 1983: 10).

By the nineteenth century, rock art began to grow in popularity. Rock art began to attract the attention of researchers, especially archaeologists and anthropologists such as Professor Leo Frobenius, and later, art historians, as well as individuals of the public interested in this art. Examples of these people are South African artists J. H. Pierneef and Walter Battiss (Gers, 2000: 128). Battiss' essays in particular on the San indicate the popularization of rock paintings in the middle 1900's, and the projection of the stereotype 'Bushman', or as Battiss called the San 'The Little Yeller Feller' (Battiss, 19-: 7).

Unfortunately, as well as interested researchers, the attention of vandals to rock paintings was also captured, and many paintings were subsequently destroyed. Figure 3 shows a damaged

painted panel. Patricia Vinnicombe, who, referred to examples of deterioration from the Giant's Castle area in the Drakensberg, noted one of the earliest examples of damage to paintings attributed to the ignorance and carelessness of the public. Vinnicombe found that paintings that were copied by Mark and Graham Hutchinson (1870) in this area showed considerable deterioration when copied later by Louis E. Tyler in 1893, and had completely disappeared when visited by herself in 1966 (Batchelor, 1989: 4).

The conservation of rock art began with rock art recorders such as George Stow as early as 1860 (Coulson and Campbell, 2001: 38). He made over two hundred copies of San rock art. Locally, in the Natal Drakensberg region, Joseph Orpen was making copies of rock art in the 1870's (Lewis-Williams, 1988: 2). Joseph Orpen (1874) discussed some of the paintings that he had copied with his Bushman guide Qing and through an interpreter, related the only recorded Bushman myth of the Bushmen living in this region (Vinnicombe, 1976: 102; Yates et. al., 1990: 20). Though at the time, Orpen did not understand the art's contextual significance.

Many researchers have since copied the rock art of the Drakensberg Park. These include Graham and Mark Hutchinson (1870), Patricia Vinnicombe (1960), and Aron Mazel's (1970) extensive photographic recordings, all of which are housed in the archives of the Natal Museum (Letley, pc: 2003).

The 1950's saw the start in a change in attitude to rock art (Ward, 1979: 482). These new techniques and perceptions began to contradict the ideas of earlier researchers. Explanations of the art, such as art-for-arts-sake and sympathetic hunting magic were no longer accepted. Today, rock art studies are based on a scientific concept that discounts arbitrary interpretations or those without a theoretical background.

Patricia Vinnicombe (1976) is considered a pioneer in a scientific numerical or, statistical approach to the study of rock art (Lewis-Williams and Dowson, 1994: 202). In 1958 she initiated a project to record all painted sites in designated research areas in the Southern Drakensberg. In 1972, together with Tim Maggs, Vinnicombe published a quantitative

analysis of 1600 superimposed paintings in the Southern Drakensberg (Lewis-Williams, 1983: 28). Vinnicombe published her findings in 1976 in *People of the Eland*.

Quantification of rock art paintings involves the location of rock art sites, and the recording of each and every single painting in each individual site. Vinnicombe developed a specific system of recording in which she aimed at noting a large number of features of each individual painting (Lewis-Williams, 1983: 39). A pattern in the paintings revealed by quantification suggests strongly that the art is systematic rather than random, and that the painters followed specific rules, especially when placing images next to or over one another (Vinnicombe, 1976: 139). This was a method that undisputedly showed the complexity of the art, and following Vinnicombe's techniques of numerical recording of rock art data, a number of researchers began the time consuming task of recording rock art data in this way in other regions of the Drakensberg (Lewis-Williams and Dowson, 1994: 202).

Another pioneer in the documentation of rock art in the Drakensberg region is Harald Pager. Pager's numerical analyses of the rock art paintings in the shelters of the Ndedema Gorge in 1971 are of great importance (Pager, 1971: vii). The Ndedema⁴ Gorge holds the most painted sites in the Natal Drakensberg, and Pager's thorough, invaluable research in this area has contributed immensely to the interpretation of San rock art. The concentration of so many painted images and the correlations that Pager found between them proved that the San thought along specific lines and held certain objects and beings as sacred.

While the quantification of rock art images seemed to offer a number of advantages at the time, such as showing the complexity of the art, and presenting a clear definition of criteria so that results from different areas could be compared, both Vinnicombe and Pager realized that San ethnography was the second 'key' to interpret rock art (Lewis-Williams and Dowson, 1994: 204). The interpretation task, as it was then perceived, was to link specific classes of image with specific San beliefs and rituals as told in the San ethnography. Vinnicombe began

⁴ The name of the Gorge is a Zulu one, meaning 'The Reverberating One'. Its name has been variously spelt in the past, Ndedema, Iditima, Ndidima, Didima (the choice of name for the Centre and lodge), Inididima, and Ndidimani, in each case the suffix merely changing (Pager, 1971: 5). The difference in the spelling of names has been used to distinguish between the Gorge and the Didima Camp and Centre.

to relate a specific class of painted subject to an explanation of a San myth or belief using the rich ethnography from the Kalahari San and the nineteenth century Bleek and Lloyd records (Lewis-Williams and Dowson, 1994: 206). (See⁵).

Lewis-Williams' research in particular has given the most insight into the interpretation of San rock art (Ward, 1979: 482). In the 1960's and 1970's, Lewis-Williams fully recorded 20 sites in the southern Giant's Castle Game Reserve, and at the same time, he began to explore records of San belief (Mazel, 1989: 67). This included the ethnographic records of the Kalahari San, /Xam San belief that was collected by Bleek and Lloyd (1970), and the information that Orpen had collected from Qing at about the same time (Lewis-Williams and Blundell, 1998: 10; Lewis-Williams, 1988: 2).

What makes Orpen's records of Qing's statements reliable is that Qing lived close to the southern Freestate (formerly known as the Orange Free State) painters. And although Qing admitted to Orpen that he did not know everything about the paintings, it became clear that Qing's statements were more than just personal views, as his interpretations about the paintings were not contradicted by /Xam informants who were shown copies of the same paintings by Bleek (Lewis-Williams and Dowson, 1994: 103; Lewis-Williams, 2003: 79, 80). Lewis-Williams' use of Orpen's records meant that what he analyzed was put into context, since Qing, the San informant, was from the Drakensberg region.

Lewis-Williams found two ethnographic features of San material culture. Firstly, that there are close similarities between San beliefs and rituals across wide expanses of subcontinent and long stretches of time, and secondly, that there was a correlation between many of these beliefs and the rock art (Lewis-Williams and Blundell, 1998: 14). Lewis-Williams' research led to the development of three lines of thought that related the accented polysemy of the eland, the importance of shamanism, and the altered states of consciousness as experienced in trance (Lewis-Williams and Dowson, 1994: 210).

⁵ In 1870, Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd set out to compile and understand the language of the !Xam San of the Western Cape, and in turn to understand San life and belief. They recorded over twelve thousand pages of verbatim text in which the San spoke directly about their way of life, rituals, myths and beliefs (Lewis-Williams and Dowson, 1989: 15).

In his thesis published in 1977, Lewis-Williams attempted to look at what can be called the cognitive content of the art of the San painters. He found that much of the art communicated ideas and values that were central to San thought. He did this firstly by quantitatively analyzing specific painted sites, and then applying a model to help explain these images (Lewis-Williams, 1977: 12).

For example, from this 'model' Lewis-Williams established in a largely quantitative way, that the eland is probably the central symbol of the Southern San art (Lewis-Williams, 1977: 104). He validates this by showing that this antelope received numerical, technical and structural emphasis beyond that of any other painted image. In his ethnographical assessment, Lewis-Williams indicates that these sources show that the eland is central to Southern San thought. Vinnicombe also recognized the importance of the eland from the numbers painted in her quantitative analysis, hence the title of her publication (1976: 162). Lewis-Williams explained that the eland image or metaphor was used as a specific sign in specific contexts within the San community, and that these contexts were related to San ritual, especially that of trance, beliefs, of shamans and the spiritual world (Lewis-Williams and Dowson, 1989: xi).

Lewis-Williams' revolutionary contribution to the rock art, as mentioned before, was to demonstrate that an intricate relationship existed between San medicine people or shamans, and the rock paintings (Lewis-Williams and Dowson, 1994: 84). Lewis-Williams believed this to be the key principle to the art, the interweaving realms and the work of the shaman. There is evidence of this in the paintings of trance dance where images of clapping women, shamans moving in a circle, depictions of potency such as nasal haemorrhage, body distortion, figures bending at acute angles, and the eland which stood for a metaphor in ritual context are shown (Lewis-Williams and Blundell, 1998: 17; Lewis-Williams and Dowson, 1992: 38) (Fig. 4). In the ethnographic records, the spiritual or trance dance depicted in San paintings was one of the first things that Qing, who was not a shaman, told Orpen in 1873 (Blundell and Lewis-Williams, 1998: 20).

Lewis-Williams' research produced a unified conception of the art, by showing that a number of concepts were unified in Southern San communities, for example, the polysemy of the

eland is linked to shamanism, and shamans to the altered states of consciousness experienced in trance in the central nervous system.

Vinnicombe's (1976) and Lewis-Williams' (1981) were publications providing historical, social, economical, and idealistic contexts for the paintings (Lewis-Williams and Dowson, 1994: 316). I mention Vinnicombe, Pager, Lewis-Williams' work in particular because of their research work done in Drakensberg, and this information is used in the construction of information presented in the Centre. Following Vinnicombe (1976) and Lewis-Williams (1980) publications, we maintain that the paintings can be explained by referring to comments made by the San about their own paintings in the 1870's.

Rock Art: Tourism and Conservation

The underlying complexities of the images in rock art and the fact that it is the oldest art in South Africa have led to rock art becoming popularized from the late 1800's and into the twentieth century. Rock art appeals to all because of its apparent ability to endure, and sustain in a manner that can be discerned by all (Bahn, 1998: xi). This is accentuated by the popular perceptions of the people who painted the images, as will be explored in chapter two.

As well as the number of works published on rock art, whether it be scientifically based or not, imitations of rock art adorn souvenirs such as postcards, ash- trays, jewelry, and fireplaces (Rudner, 1989: 261; Bahn, 1998: xxvii). For example the adoption of motifs from Southern San art by studio ceramists in South Africa during and after the 1950's (namely the Kalahari and Drosdy studios) arguably reflects a contemporary surge of interest in San art and its essentialisation as 'African' (Gers, 2000: 114).

There has been a dramatic increase in the use of San imagery in advertising and visual media in South Africa in recent years. Some of this imagery has been included in national symbols such as the 1996 South African Olympic Team logo, and the new South African coat of arms (Blundell, 1997: 153; Barnard, 2004: 5-22). These images have contributed to the visualization of the stereotype of the Bushman.

The rock art sites have become increasingly popular, being visited by enthusiasts and vandals. Both local and international tourists come to see South Africa's rock art heritage, and many people are cashing in. With this increase in popularity, pressure on rock art sites themselves has increased, and the results of this increase in visitor number poses a threat to the future existence of rock art.

The problem is that the general public does not understand the fragility of these ancient images (Coulson and Campbell, 2001: 241; Bahn, 1998: 262). (Appendix one has been included to give a brief explanation of the structure of the sandstone rocks on which the images were painted to give an understanding as to why these paintings are so fragile.) While little can be done to save rock art from the forces of nature, conservators can learn how to stabilize the art against rapid deterioration, and how to present it to the public so those visitors can gain maximum satisfaction from it (Coulson and Campbell, 2001: 244) The current idea is to stop the human impact on rock art sites, since it is a severe threat to rock art, but more manageable than trying to manage the impact of weathering (Townley-Basset, 2001: 15).

Since the discovery of rock art in the nineteenth century, it has fallen victim to human visitors in the form of accidental damage as well as deliberate damage (Bahn, 1998: 255). The most famous incident of innocent vandalism occurred in 1992, when well meaning French scouts cleaned up the garbage and graffiti in several caves, removing an Ice Age Bison painting in the cave of Mayrières with a steel brush (Bahn, 1998: 256). The recentness of this incident clearly shows the lack of knowledge and disregard that people have for rock art, and also the lack of protection that such sites have.

Whilst this is an example of accidental damage, in South Africa damage to rock art is more often caused deliberately. The most common examples of deliberate damage are people touching the paintings, dousing the paintings with water to make them more visible, making campfires in the caves, kicking up dust, deliberately scrawling graffiti across the paintings and adding bawdy details, and even attempting to steal them by chopping them from the rock surface (Lewis-Williams and Dowson, 1992: 12; Coulson and Campbell, 2001: 17:

Woodhouse in SARARA, 1991: 6-13; Batchelor, 1989: 27). Figure 5 shows a gauge in the painting of an eland where pigment has been removed.

In 1988, in a survey of thousands of paintings in the shelters of the Ndedema Gorge, it was revealed that in the fifteen years since Pager's earlier (1971) survey, there had been an alarming increase in damage and loss, fading and flaking (Bahn, 1998: 265). This was primarily attributed to camping in the shelters as the path to Cathedral Peak passes close to several painted sites, and many of these used are by campers for overnight stops. All four painted sites in the immediate vicinity of this path had signs of modern human occupation and two were vandalized. At one site, candle wax had been allowed to drip over the paintings (Mazel, 1981: 169).

Intentional damage is unfortunately a major problem in South Africa, partly due to the lack of funds to implement security and education, even though rock art is protected through National Monument Council laws (Batchelor, 1989: 28). Perhaps the only way to protect rock art sites is to restrict them completely from the public since it has been found that caves that are frequently visited lose more paintings than those that are restricted to the public (Lewis-Williams and Dowson, 1992: 12). It has been suggested that the painted sites in the Ndedema Gorge be closed to the public to decrease visitor pressure to the sites.

The main threat in terms of the rock art in the Drakensberg region as mentioned before is expanding tourism (Swart, pc: 2004). More and more people visit this area every year, and rock art is becoming of increasing interest to visitors locally and abroad. While rock art may play an important role in the development of tourism and its associated industries, without an effective infrastructure already in place before visitor numbers increase; rock art will suffer (Coulson and Campbell, 2001: 244).

Rock art conservationists have had to re-think how to bring rock art to the public while reducing the pressure to rock art sites. Information centres and rock art centres were thought of as ways of providing the visitor with a rewarding experience and at the same time managing responsibly and protecting the art. It is the behavior of the public at rock art sites

that is not easy to anticipate, and this is one of the focal points of such centres, since it is the attitude of these visitors, rather than the numbers that cause damage (Coulson and Campbell, 2001: 232).

The attitude of visitors is usually one of ignorance and their perceptions of the San people and their art is often flawed by misconceptions that have largely been presented through the mass media. This aspect will be discussed further in chapter two. Perhaps the most important and effective mechanism to manage people at painted sites is through public education (Loubser, 1991: 134; Batchelor, 1989: 28). Convincing the public that rock paintings are relevant may reduce costly management requirements on site, and this concept is one that underpins the Didima Rock Art Centre.

Chapter Two

A background to the Didima Rock Art Centre

The main intention of the Didima Rock Art Centre at Cathedral Peak is to educate the public, to take public pressure off rock art sites, teach the value of cultural heritage, and generate income and jobs for the local community. The Centre is an example of how tourism can be made to benefit rock art, instead of being a threat to it and thereby espousing a long-term solution to preserving the rock art of the Drakensberg. The Centre is also an example of how education can be achieved through well-managed tourism, with publicity and promotion being of prime importance in the education process.

The Didima Rock Art Centre is the product of the co-operation between archaeologists from the Natal Museum in Pietermaritzburg, AMAFA, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, and The Wits Rock Art Institute (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). These institutional bodies are in turn under a single technical display committee that is chaired by separate organizations within Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, the principal directors being Mr. Dave Frandsen and Mr. Mark Coetzee.

These institutional bodies are also represented on the Cultural Advisory Committee, whose function it is to advise Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife on heritage management issues (van de Venter, 2002: 12). The Cultural Advisory Committee works together with the San Council of South Africa to ensure that the information presented about the San is accurate (Blackmore, pc: 2003).

In the past, suggestions for, and the establishment of rock art centres have been made internationally in American and Australian cultural and natural parks as well as in South Africa (Mazel, 1981: 104). In South Africa, two examples are in the UKhahlamba Drakensberg Park Area: the Kamberg Centre to be found in the Kamberg Nature Reserve, and the interpretive facility at Battle Cave in the Giants Castle Game Reserve (Reid, 2003: 14; Mazel, 1981: 190).

The Didima Rock Art Centre at the Didima Camp, Cathedral Peak is unique because of the attempt by those involved to merge Southern San rock art into world heritage values. This will be achieved, as will be explored, by foregrounding the rock art to be found in the KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg and thereby breaking popular false perceptions of the Southern San. (See ⁶)

Dr. George Hughes, former director of KZN Wildlife and present Chief Executive Officer of The Conservation Trust, conceived the concept for the Didima San Rock Art Interpretation Centre (Coetzee, pc: 2004). Hughes had recorded rock art as a cadet in the Giants Castle Game Reserve and from his experiences developed an interest and passion for Southern San rock art. His interest led him to formulate new and exciting ideas to help understand the interpretation of the art, the most exciting idea stemming from his visit to The Gettysberg Battle Museum in America (Coetzee, pc: 2004). The Gettysberg Battle Museum houses a cyclorama display; a circular, fully interactive, audio-visual theatre that surrounds the viewer, giving a three-dimensional theatrical sensation. On his return to South Africa, Dr. Hughes suggested the cyclorama idea as a unique-to-South Africa rock art interpretation device. The idea of an interactive, three-dimensional sensation captured the minds of the technical display committee, and after nearly ten years of planning it was decided that an audio-visual display within an artificial cave setting alongside an interpretative museum would suffice.

Funding, and the authorities to put such an idea together was all that was required, and this finally came with private funding through the KZN Conservation Trust late in 2002. The KZN Rock Art Trust came into being after the development of the Kamberg Rock Art Interpretive Centre in June 2002 (van de Venter, 2002: 12). The major part of the funding was received from the KZN Government, with large donations being given by the National Lottery Fund, Anglo American Chairman's Fund, First Rand Foundation, and the de Beers Chairman's Fund (Hughes, 2004: 22).

⁶ The architect, Mr. Derrick Thomas, was chosen to construct the Centre after winning a competition that allowed designers to bring forward their ideas for the building (Raubenheimer, pc: 2003). This building was chosen for its design as it fits the design of the Didima Camp buildings as well as looking 'environmentally friendly': the building is completely curvilinear.

The idea of a rock art interpretive facility was not the first to be conceptualized for the Cathedral Peak area. Aron Mazel (1981), after his groundbreaking study in the Drakensberg in 1979, suggested that an interpretive centre be established in the Cathedral Peak area. His justification for this was that the Cathedral Peak area is the richest and best rock art areas in South Africa, and that its public knowledge thereof had 'numerous implications for the conservation of its rock art' (Mazel, 1981: 147).

In 1981, Mazel documented the first major conservation plan for rock art in the Drakensberg region, and suggested principles for conserving archaeological resources for each reserve in the Drakensberg. Mazel's recommendations integrated education, interpretation, and rock art management, including the establishment of centres that would embody these three elements. Since Mazel's is the only publication that refers to interpretive centres in the Drakensberg region, I will compare and contrast his insight relating to the aims of interpretive facilities, how such centres are structured, and what visitors look for and should receive to what has been presented in the Didima Centre.

Aims and objectives of the Didima San Rock Art Interpretation Centre

The overall aim of an interpretive facility, according to Mazel, would be to 'assist the visitors in understanding and appreciating the archaeological resources of the reserve and the necessity and the aims in conserving these resources' (Mazel, 1981: 112). This is the major aim of the Didima Centre, to assist the visitors in understanding and appreciating the Southern San rock art in the reserve (Blackmore, pc: 2003). One change to Mazel's statement that I would make in keeping with present socio-political developments in South Africa concerning the San people is that of archaeological resource to cultural resource. This is because it is not only important that Southern San rock art be conserved for archaeological purposes, but more importantly, that rock art is conserved in recognition that it is a part of South African cultural heritage.

Listed below are the specific aims and objectives of the Didima Centre, according to field interview responses. These range from international to local needs relating to the Southern San and San rock art, and include:

- the stimulation of eco-tourism
- the elevation of the San and their rock art according to international standards
- to relate Southern San to their art, dispel old myths and reveal insight into a culture that has been largely misunderstood
- for the identity of the San of the region to be revealed and their descendents acknowledged
- to explain current research and thinking
- to become a focal point for existing San communities to come and be a part of their own culture
- to reduce the impact on rock art sites by bringing the art to the public
- to educate tourists and the general public about rock art
- to generate funds for the future protection and management of rock art
- and job creation for the local communities who are able to produce artwork and sell it to local and foreign tourists (Blackmore. pc: 2003; Swart and Prins. pc: 2003; Raubenheimer. pc: 2003).

Taking these aims and objectives into consideration, I will discuss tourism, heritage conservation, and visual communication to show the interactions between these three factors, and the tensions between them in debating the aims of the Centre.

Interaction between tourism and heritage management

The interaction between tourism and heritage management is intended to be mutually beneficial to the Didima Centre, and ‘cultural tourism’ is the term used to describe the intermingling of the two issues (Mabulla. 2000: 213).

The objective of cultural tourism is that the tourist is able to visit sites with the opportunity to enjoy, study, and appreciate the past and in turn, revenues are generated through tourism to support the protection and management of heritage. The objective of managing heritage is to communicate its significance and the need for its conservation to its visitors (<icomos.org/tourism/charter.html>, 1999). Therefore cultural tourism promotes a relationship whereby tourists and cultural heritage resources benefit from one another.

This is the principle that drives the Didima Centre. The cultural heritage being promoted, the Southern San and their rock art is marketed in such a way to attract tourists, while tourism generates revenue to be re-invested into the management and conservation of this cultural heritage. At the same time, visitors are enticed away from the actual rock art site by the benefit of gaining a unique educational experience, relieving conservational pressure placed on the actual rock art. Tourism and heritage management thereby hold a reciprocal relationship with regard to the Centre.

In turn, well-managed tourist access to heritage, such as that hoped for in the Didima Centre, brings with it a duty for respect for heritage values; that is, interests relating to the present day San communities (<icomos.org/tourism/charter.html>, 1999). Poorly managed tourism, on the other hand, can pose threats to the physical nature, as explained in the first chapter and to the nature of the Southern San customs and their art. The next section explores how this becomes an important factor with regard to the San community, given their situation in the past and present South African society.

Achieving the balance between tourism and heritage conservation through visual communication

The difference between well-managed and poorly managed heritage as a tourist venture is one that is an important challenge in the design or structure and the visual information presented within an interpretation centre. The primary medium of communication in the Didima Centre is visual. Therefore, the organizers have needed to ensure that there is no tension between heritage conservation and tourism by monitoring how the heritage is communicated visually to tourists, thereby ensuring that the aims of the Centre are not obstructed.

I refer once again to Mazel's (1981) publication and what he suggests an interpretive facility such as the Didima Centre should contain and present visually.

“The centre should serve as a general introduction to the visitors to the reserve, including sections on for example, geology and archaeology. In the archaeological section, emphasis should be placed on the archaeology of the reserve and its position in the wider scheme of South African pre-history. Attention should be drawn to prehistoric social and religious systems and subsistence strategies, and where possible stresses that of the particular

reserve. The importance of rock art for interpretation and providing insight into prehistoric religious systems and general lifestyles must be emphasized” (Mazel, 1981: 112).

This type of information is presented in the interpretive museum display area of the Didima Centre. What Mazel has implied in this quotation is that the information to be presented should remain focused not only along specific disciplines such as geology, archaeology and history, but also to the specific region from which the cultural and natural resources are to be found. This is one of the aims of the Didima Centre, to foreground the Natal Drakensberg San and their art (Blackmore, pc: 2003; Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). Interpretive information that is focused is more likely to make sense and becomes relevant to the visitor visiting a specific region. Generalized information tends to trivialize the significance of Southern San art in that it gives a general representation of the San and their art as if it is the same throughout South Africa. In essence, the Didima Centre aims at highlighting the qualities that are particular to Southern San rock art, such as the significance of the eland.

Furthermore, it is important that Mazel’s report mentions that research relating to rock art should be included, as specific thoughts, opinions and statements that are made in interpretation should be backed up by solid research, such as the research discussed in chapter one. This also shows the visitor that the interpretation being presented is scientifically and academically sound in order to counter popular misconceptions that have been produced about the San. Research information should be continuously reviewed and revised as new theories and research emerges.

Mazel (1981) concludes that information should be collected and included from a wide variety of sources to give a broad overview of the social and cultural context with regard to San life-ways and their art. These sources include general prehistory textbooks, specialized publications, rock art research, artifact collections and excavation material (Mazel, 1981: 112). This information is all relevant, and these sources have been tapped in selecting interpretation information in the Didima Centre. However, Mazel has failed to mention the inclusion probably the most important source of information of all, and that is both the reference to ethnographic records, of which South Africa has a rich source of, and the views

of the present day San communities themselves. Although it has been argued that because the Southern San no longer exist, and the descendants have lost much of the San tradition, that all the information researchers have to rely on is that of the academic research done by many academics over the past two centuries (Buntman, <abdn.ac.uk/chags9/lbuntman.htm>, 2002).

In the Didima Centre, through the Cultural Advisory Committee, all ideas related to the interpretive information to be displayed were mediated through the San Foundation of South Africa to include the research and ethnographic records of the San of the Drakensberg region (Blackmore, pc: 2003). The San descendants of the Drakensberg region were involved in the design process of the Centre as well.

By presenting only the pre-historic information as published in popular textbooks, there is the tendency to reinforce the stereotype that the San people of today, or if the Southern San were with us today, that they would be living in pre-historic bliss, running around in skins, wielding bows and arrows or digging sticks, and living in harmony with nature (Buntman, <abdn.ac.uk/chags9/lbuntman.htm>, 2002). An example is in the book *Bushman Art of the Drakensberg*, where a photograph shows a San man posed in the action of hunting. (Fig. 6) This is the popular perception that the general public has held about the San people for as long as two centuries ago, and this has been a major issue relating to aspects of visual representation of the San and their art to society to present.

Chapter three will explore how the organizers of the Didima Centre have visually represented the Southern San.

Visitor needs and aspirations

The Didima Centre should attain a level of visual presentation that achieves positive outcomes, such as educating the public, and reversing myths and misconceptions. At the same time, there should be minimum adverse effects on the presentation of heritage and lifestyle of the San community, while still responding to the needs and aspirations of the visitor (<icomos.org/tourism/charter.html>, 1999). Audience expectations become a complex issue when considering the visual presentation of the San and their art.

In Mazel's study (1981), he questions what visitors look for at interpretive facilities and concluded that entertainment ensures visitor experience and a successful interpretation program. Mazel proposed that entertainment should be provided in the form of small lecture theatres that could be used for talks, to show films, or for small shops (Mazel, 1981: 113). The Didima Centre takes the 'entertainment experience' to the extreme by using an artificial cave setting as the 'lecture theatre'; and then projecting film accompanied by an audio stimulus. Hence, the traditional attraction, that is, the museum, is augmented with technology. But, unlike visitor attractions in the leisure industry in which entertainment figures strongly, the artificial cave is a reconstruction of a sacred site, and therefore a strong educational element is crucial to this aspect (Shackley, 2001: 7).

It would seem that visitors, when at a painted rock art site are motivated by curiosity and a desire to know more about the site. They want to understand the significance of the paintings and hence in the same way to identify with the people who painted them (Mazel, 1981: 113). Suitable educational devices, especially by means of interpretation devices (for example interactive displays) accomplish this (Shackley, 2001: 21), but two problems arise.

Firstly, the lack of information in the form of information that is oversimplified, and secondly, difficulty in translating research results and academic speculation into a form that is intelligible to the general public (Mazel, 1981: 113). Related to tourist outcomes, visitors will be unhappy about paying for an experience that is not enjoyable or that they do not identify with, especially if the facility is marred with inadequate information. Although Mazel emphasizes the need for educational features, Blundell (1996) in a paper criticizing the interpretive information on display at Main Cave at Giants Castle Reserve notes that Mazel did not question the way in which material was to be presented. The implication is that badly managed interpretation sites have an impact on heritage outcomes.

According to Shackley (2001), the primary motivation for a visit to a heritage site is 'visitor experience'. The basic assumption is that the visitor who frequents the Didima Centre would have wanted to visit an original rock art site and therefore, what the visitor would expect is an

experience similar to that of being at a rock art site. Visitor experience affects how the visitor perceives heritage, that is, the San and their art.

The candidate contends that the Didima Centre should be responsible for preserving a certain emotive experience attached to visiting the real painted site. Shackley (2001), refers to this as reconstructing the 'spirit of place.' The 'spirit' of the real rock art site, or the emotive experience at a real painted site should be repeated at the reconstructed site. Blundell (1996) argues that emphasis on practical issues has hampered current approaches to the reconstruction of interpretive material at rock art sites. He states that organizers should move beyond 'preservation' to 'presentation' by studying the complex and diverse emotional and intellectual experiences that are involved when people visit a rock art site (Blundell, 1996: 15). If visitors are unable to visit the real painted site for fear of negative impact on the physical resource itself, a 'real' likeness in an artificial setting is a worthy alternative. (See ⁷)

Shackley argues that authenticity is an experience that is greatly sought after by the visitor to an interpretive facility. (See the discussion of Nettleton's essay below as well as the next section.) Tourists visiting a museum want the 'real thing', and curators respond to this nostalgia by offering objects that stand for the culture of their creators (Butler, 1999: 15). By viewing ethnographic objects and ideas, the viewers are able to experience and appropriate authenticity. For example, African art history is generally concerned with the art that is made by black Africans and used by black Africans (Nettleton, 1991:32). Nettleton (1991) explains that this art, as well as the people who produced it were "defined by western European scholars as 'traditional', social, and within religious contexts". the term traditional in particular meaning 'static and unchanging' and 'enshrined within a mystique of an historicity, essentially denoting a lack of outside influence'. Art 'styles' relating to African art were established according to a taxonomy related to pre-existing cultural groupings. From this, Nettleton (1991) concludes that the idea of African 'art' is constituted in the idea of dying traditions, and whose demise is often a guarantee of authenticity. The viewer authenticates this 'dying tradition' by viewing a part of the cultural practice that still survives. In this case it is

⁷ By using the word 'artificial', I suggest the meaning 'made in imitation of something real' (Makins, 1994: 30).

the African artwork, and in the case of the Southern San, it is the rock paintings and rock art site as artifacts of past cultural practices.

According to Selwyn (1996), tourists seek authenticity on two levels. Firstly, the tourist is searching for a sense of the authentic in order to 'reclaim what has felt been lost by modern life' (Selwyn, 1996: 2). They expect a place untouched by the present, and may even become disappointed if not so. Artificial presentation and reconstruction can play a critical role in reinforcing the ideology of the West from the non-West (Butler, 1999: 16). This will be expanded on in the discussion of issues relating to presentation of the San and their art. Secondly, in seeking the authentic, a 'staged' authenticity is often appreciated, related to the character and quality of the information presented (Selwyn, 1996: 7). The Didima Centre stages authenticity by using technology and a play on the senses, creating a feeling of nostalgia.

But, issues of authenticity arise with the introduction of technology with the use of simulation and virtual reality (Shackley, 2001: 8). This is because with staged authenticity, a mismatch between imagination and reality sometimes occur (Shackley, 2001: 20). The Didima Centre could be likened to a Disney world, where the idealized transposition of a contradictory reality is simulated according to Baudrillard (2001). It is a simulacrum, a place that plays at being an appearance of the real, but bears no relation to any reality (Baudrillard, 2001: 170). The artificial cave plays at being a real rock art site, but where in the Drakensberg, or in the rest of the world would one find for example, so many features at a single rock art site. Baudrillard (2001) states that none of our societies know how to 'manage their mourning for the real', and thus it is by artificial revitalization that society tries to escape this 'mourning'.

Boniface and Fowler (1993) state 'The social and cultural characteristics of a host society will influence its attractiveness to tourists'. Tourism uses specific elements of a community to its advantage in order to attract visitors and increase tourist experience. The heritage of the community is used as a vice to increase the tourist experience, and market the host community. I will now describe how this has come to impact on perceptions of the San and their art through time, and how it has come to affect the visual representation of this group.

This discussion will be used to credit or discredit what is visually presented in the Didima Centre.

Marketing the image of the San

The strategy of cultural tourism views resources as marketable products and places priority on their management (Mabulla, 2000: 223). In tourism, marketing is the management process of selecting tourist markets and providing them with the tourist product in view of achieving optimal tourist satisfaction and maximum organizational goals (Mabulla, 2000: 225). The Didima Centre is focused on exploring ways that can generate revenue and public support for the cultural heritage management of Southern San rock art. An effective means to accomplishing this goal is to make the products of the past attractive and accessible for cultural tourism. Therefore, in the marketing of a culture, focus will fall on promoting certain features to obtain certain target markets by looking at the nature of the product to decide how to 'sell' it to visitors.

The present marketing image of the San generally is to make the San seem a sensitive subject to the public (Blackmore, pc: 2003). This is because the romantic view of the savage hunter-gatherer or the idea of the poor African minority that has been reproduced over and over by the media and popular culture for tourist consumption is what is thought of as what the tourist expects. (See the example of Farini's photograph showing the 'earthmen' in figure 7).

The Didima Rock Art Centre is in essence selling the experience of 'contact' with the Southern San and their art, as well as educating the public about these subjects and showing that Southern San descendants do exist and that the art is still a significant practice to these people. In the construction of the visual information presented in the Didima Centre, the organizers have had to avoid using specific San heritage features as a tourist lure for consumption, since the images projected about a specific culture act as a potent force in creating perceptions of a specific culture (Boniface and Fowler, 1993: 1).

Heritage presentations are hence susceptible to distortion for the reason of making the product desirable to the visitor. Some commentators sell heritage as nostalgia, distorting history, or

using popular misconceptions about the history of a culture for the benefit of tourism (Shackley, 2001: 8; Boniface and Fowler, 1993: 4). The organizers of the Centre have had to be careful to create a market that satisfies visitor experience while still remaining sensitive to the interpretation and presentation of the cultural heritage of the Southern San in the ethnographic present.

The distortion of the visual representation of the San and their art has been a part of the tourist industry since early travelers came to South Africa in the 1700's. In *Picturing Bushmen*, Gordon (1997) explores how the Denver Africa Expedition of 1925 distorted the perception of the San by commodifying San images, and how this had unanticipated consequences. Before the expedition, the San were commonly presented as impoverished savages (Gordon, 1997: 1). The Denver Africa Expedition, through the photographs produced, played a key role in romanticizing the San people, and this image has permeated Western culture even to present day. The photographs taken on the expedition by Paul Hoefler were visual representations of the San people that intrigued the viewer because of the way the photographer choreographed his 'subjects' (Gordon, 1997: 158). (Fig. 8) He chose only those individuals who were 'pristine' and 'primitive' in order to represent them as 'ideal types' according to Western ideals. In this way, the photographer staged authenticity to give the viewer the 'real' experience of what they might expect on encounter with a typical San person. But, this staged reality was far from true reality.

The view that such projects as the Denver African Expedition entrenched about the San people permeated into the Western perception of San rock art, with the art being classed as 'primitive' and the result of a 'child-like' peoples pursuit of pleasure (Willcox, 1956: 79-84; Lewis-Williams and Dowson, 1994: 386). From this, it is evident of the far-reaching effects of how as early as 1925; the distortion of the visual representation of the San has been used to impress the public and tourism.

More myths and misunderstandings have since been held about the San people than any other of our planet's population has (Tobias, 1997: 19). These range from questions such as, 'Were they human?' 'Are the San a dying race?' and questions about the primitivist supposed

simplicity of their art. Despite all the empirical evidence produced, tourists, development planners, and even anthropologists and archaeologists still persist with the image of the San as 'virtuous ecologists living in happy equilibrium with the environment' (Gordon, 1997: 9).

On another level, the South African exhibition and catalogue both titled *Miscast* (1996) presented by Pippa Skotnes is an attempt by the curator, Skotnes, to explore the ways in which the San people have been presented to the public by means of museum display and through the mass media. In this way she had hoped to present the mediated reality about the San people, and their demise in South Africa. "The exhibition is a critical and visual exploration of the term 'Bushman' and the various relations that give rise to it" (Skotnes, 1996: 18). "What we hope to achieve through the catalogue and exhibition... is to begin the process of dealing with complex issues, to tell the story of genocide in Southern Africa, to reveal the extraordinary cultural and artistic achievement of the San, to focus on the need to acknowledge and preserve rock art as a part of our heritage, and to raise and stimulate awareness of the conditions, aspirations and interests of Khoisan descendants in southern Africa" (Skotnes, 1996: 9).

The curator had good intentions, but the exhibit was highly criticized. Although Skotnes (1996) shows reality by presenting images of the colonial portrayals of the San, to images of San prisoners, images that show San body parts as if they were zoological specimens, and shocking presentations and images of casts and trophy heads, meaning to show misconceptions of the San and the consequences thereof, many (being the San and San descendants) felt dissatisfied, hurt and even humiliated by the sensitive materials presented. (Fig. 9) It was recognized that, when represented by an artist, artifacts from research collections would evoke an array of new meanings for the viewer (Skotnes, 1996: 11) The accompanying catalogue includes articles and images that reflect differing aspects of research on the San as to explain the complexities related to the studies of the San people. But, there is no essays included by the San themselves, or any San descendant: their living inheritors are voiceless.

Barbara Buntman (1995) aims to explore the specific visual representation of some San people who are a part of South Africa's tourist industry. She explains that images such as these express a common desire to capture a long-lost past, or state of being that is provided not only by the representation of the stereotypical San person, but of popular ideas of Southern San rock paintings (Buntman, <abdn.ac.uk/chags9/1buntman.htm>, 2002). Buntman (<museums.org.za/sam/conf/enc/buntman.htm>, accessed 18 August 2003), explains that this is the "identity that could be called the generalized 'other', in which they are shown in such stereotypical ways as either romantic depictions of a 'First People', or as one of Africa's marginal under-developed groups". And society's pre-occupation with authenticity has encouraged the continued fantasy of the San people's mythical roles such as the hunter with his bow and arrows (Buntman, <abdn.ac.uk/chags9/1buntman.htm>, 2002). Society, as viewers of the San are trapped and paralyzed by a spectacle that is an image and vision of the 'Bushman' (Buntman and Bester, 1997: 32).

Buntman believes that a simplistic connection exists between this connection of Bushman-ness and the spiritual dimensions ascribed to the paintings as images of their cultural production. To reinforce this, is a recent statement made by Pat de la Harpe (2003) in the popular wildlife magazine *Wildside*; she states that, 'it is perhaps the rock paintings ... that most reveal their gentle culture' (de la Harpe, 2003: 9) The San people and their art have come to be understood as the social constructs of others, and defined visually as a certain type of image by these others; namely non-San people. The creation of visual and written identities that have been constructed on behalf of the San people reduce different San communities and individuals to a single, consumable product. And since the San themselves do not participate in the visual presentation of themselves, they are always represented as different and other (Buntman and Bester, 1997: 35). There has thus far been no self-representation by the San people of themselves, and popular distorted perceptions persist preserved in forms for consumer consumption (Buntman, <museums.org.za/sam/conf/enc/buntman.htm>, accessed on 18 August 2003). This keeps a popular, idealized image of the San alive and this idealized image continues to be used to promote heritage conservation.

The impact of the Denver African Expedition, and of the Miscast Exhibition involves the consideration of the culture of visualization that gave such projects direction, and in turn was influenced by it (Gordon, 1997: book cover). In the same way, analysis of the culture of visualization that gave rise to what direction the visual information took in the Didima Centre, and the impact of this on communication to visitors will be assessed.

Revisionist research such as that of Skotnes, Buntman, and Gordon foregrounds some of the major issues that will be addressed in the Centre. A discussion of these issues follows.

Issues regarding the representation of the San

Authenticity

Under the guise of ‘authenticity for sale’, the promise of contact with ‘real’ San lifestyle and ‘real’ San rock art, artificial constructions of the San culture continue to be made. This results in the entrenchment of mythification, achieved by producers through using generalized notions, actors, props, and natural features that create the impression of the ‘real’. This issue poses serious implications to the interpretation of the customs and art of the San. An example is of the interpretation facility at Main Caves in the Giants Castle Game Reserve. (Fig. 10) The outdated and poor interpretive material that was prepared by the Natal Parks Board (now Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife), along with the diorama depicting the staged actions of casts of San people as if they would inhabit the cave, shows how ‘authenticity for sale’ can create false responses in the visitors to an interpretive facility (Blundell, 1996: 41). For the Didima Centre, academic discourse recognizes the complexity inherent in understanding and representation of San identity, whereas producers and consumers of the many aspects of popular culture generally do not make these distinctions (Buntman, <abdn.ac.uk/chags9/1buntman.htm>, 2002).

Authenticity can be achieved by acknowledging that the San people inhabit a world that is both contemporary and traditional, and by considering the production of art in the context of contemporary San society. It can also be achieved by presenting the San as a culture as opposed to presenting them as a part of our natural history (Blundell, 1996: 33).

Representation of the San by themselves and ‘others’

The Didima Centre questions levels of authenticity partly by the representation of the San by themselves, since dominant visual themes reveal the ideologies of their producers. Images reveal the systems of thought and relations of power that frame the views of their producers of the publicity, the owners and consuming society (Buntman, 1995: 54; Skotnes, 1996: 18). Responses to controversial exhibits in recent years, such as the *Miscast* Exhibition, have demonstrated the dissatisfaction felt by many concerned about the misrepresentation of ethnic groups, and the exclusion of them from the process of interpreting their culture.

The San, like their art, are transformed into the subject of displays and hence are objectified. Since the San have not generally been able to represent themselves, popular contemporary images do not acknowledge the individual, or recognize social structures, and conform rather to the Western canon depicting them as the ‘primitive other’ (Buntman, 1996: 279). If the San are able to represent themselves in the interpretation of their traditional life-ways and art, a process of breaking down the barriers between the San as objects of study and San as subjective agents in knowledge production can actively take place (Bank, 1995: 1).

The power of visual communication within the interpretative museum context

Within the museum context, the representation of the San and San rock art often takes on a specific type of visual representation, as explained in this chapter. This specific visual representation aims at giving the viewer an experience of another world, and is often adapted to current tastes, trends and fashion produced by ‘modern’ society (Buntman, <museums.org.za/sam/conf/enc/buntman.htm>, accessed on 18 August 2003). In visual production, such as in the museum context and relating to interpretive issues, a representation communicates ideas to the viewer. And, when confronted with, for example, a stereotype image of what the San are thought to be the viewer considers the image in terms of a value.

Therefore the viewer is subject to the power that is contained in the production of visual imagery and interpretive material produced by certain authorities for representation. Museums affirm a local, ethnic, national and international identity that is communicated through visual

presentation (Kusimba, 1996: 165). The Didima Centre should avoid using a series of generic signifiers of the San as a romanticized culture.

Conflating rock art with the perceptions of the Southern San people

Buntman (<museums.org.za/sam/conf/enc/buntman.htm>, accessed on 18 August 2003)

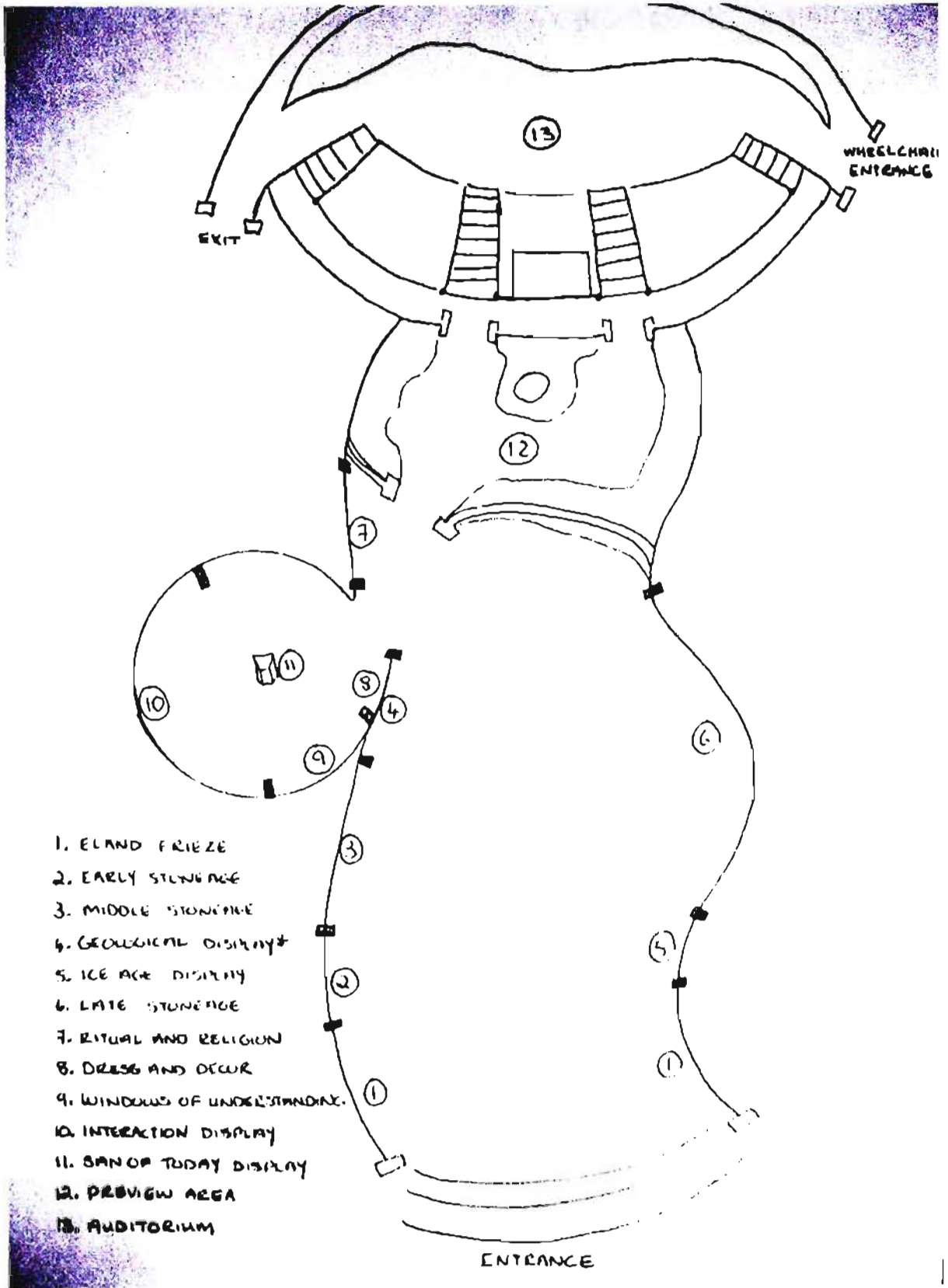
explains that the Southern San rock paintings have become confused with the idealizations of 'Bushman-ness' as the viewers conflate the object, the rock painting, with the subject, the San people. She explains that popular culture, which uncritically holds the views of the static cultures, accepts the painted images, which were originally part of a complex belief system, simply as icons and emblems of a timeless and indivisible people (Buntman, <museums.org.za/sam/conf/enc/buntman.htm>, accessed on 18 August 2003). Whilst conflating rock art, the stereotypical views of the hunter-figure conveys the suggestion that this age old technology, a reflection of a complex cultural practice is put into a context ancient available for the tourist to enjoy. This perpetuating popular connection has found its way into the copies that are made of San rock art, and many representations that signify 'Bushman-ness' rely on copies or stylized versions of the rock painting.

For example, early rock art enthusiasts such as Tongue (1909), Stow (1930), and Battiss (1939, 1948, 1955, 1958) either re-arranged, modified, stylized, exaggerated, censored, and also simplified and modified the colours of their copies of rock art imagery (Gers, 2000: 117). These texts have been used as examples of imagery to decorate for example, ceramic wares in the 1950's, and because their producers modified these reference images, pejorative views of the San and their art were produced.

Dowson (1996) explores the use of rock art imagery in South Africa today in Skotnes' publication *Miscast*. He states that rock art is not only reproduced in a wide variety of contemporary contexts in South Africa, but in contexts that reinforce perceived images of the San (Dowson, 1996: 315 in Skotnes, 1996). (Fig. 11) On reproducing the art in contemporary contexts, the artist's sensitivity to nuances in the rock art that are important to interpretation and understanding of the arts complexities may be discarded. This denies the possibility that the art was originally produced with a specific intent, making the use of composites, or copies

of San art reproduced in certain contexts an issue. In the Didima Centre, careful attention has been given to how rock art images are reproduced, and the appropriation of these copies in contexts when they may affect perceptions about the art and its creators.

To conclude, Lewis-Williams (1996), from his study of the work done by Wilhelm Bleek (1870), argues that the rock paintings can constitute a weapon with which to demolish demeaning and false ideas 'generally entertained in regard to the Bushmen and their mental condition' (Lewis-Williams, 1996: 311 in Skotnes, 1996). Bleek realized that the art is as valuable as the ethnographic and interpretative literature gathered as San rock art imagery constitutes the most powerful argument against those who believe the San authors of those paintings to be simple, primitive and distasteful (Lewis-Williams, 1996: 307 in Skotnes, 1996).



- 1. ELAND FRIEZE
- 2. EARLY STONE AGE
- 3. MIDDLE STONE AGE
- 4. GEOLOGICAL DISPLAY*
- 5. ICE AGE DISPLAY
- 6. LATE STONE AGE
- 7. RITUAL AND RELIGION
- 8. DRESS AND DECOR
- 9. WINDOWS OF UNDERSTANDING.
- 10. INTERACTION DISPLAY
- 11. SAN OF TODAY DISPLAY
- 12. PREVIEW AREA
- 13. AUDITORIUM

Figure 42

Chapter Three

This chapter presents a visual analysis of the Didima Rock Art Centre, consisting of the ways in which cultural heritage; tourism and visual communication have been dealt with within the Centre by examining museum practice as well as the issues outlined in the previous chapter.

A visit to the Centre leads the viewer along 'a journey of discovery' by using the significance of the eland antelope as a theme that threads through the experience (Hughes, 2004: 23). The theme of the eland is first introduced in an interpretive display area that offers insight into the life of the Southern San, and is continued as the visitor is lead into an auditorium - a replica of a Clarens sandstone cave - where the significance of the eland to the San people is disclosed. The eland antelope is what is unique to the Southern San and to their rock art, and hence the eland theme is used in the Centre to show the growing significance of the eland to the San people over time as well as explaining a historical timeline of the development of the San people and their art (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). (Fig. 12) Swart and Prins' (2003) justification for this is that the eland is the most frequently depicted image in San art as discussed in chapter one, and that the Southern San called themselves 'the People of the eland'.

A brief overview of the interpretative display area

The Natal Museum, Wits Rock Art Research Institute and AMAFA were all responsible for the collection of the data to be presented, with certain individuals from these institutions being responsible for decisions about the displays, materials, the interpretations used and understandings to be conveyed. (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003).

Mark Coetzee from Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife supervised the display component and presentation in the artificial cave (Coetzee, pc: 2004). The building of the displays commenced in July of 2003, and was completed for the opening of the Centre on Heritage Day, 24 September 2003 (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). The display component is not yet complete as there are intentions to add a geographic display and to the interaction display.

The eland theme is launched with two 'herds' of eland that have been constructed as bas-reliefs from concrete on either side of the entrance of the Centre. (Fig. 13a, 13b) There is the replication of a full range of herd individuals, ranging from the large eland bull on the right to the calves and females in the herd. The eland friezes are intended to pose the question to the visitor, 'What is the significance of the eland?' (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). The entrance feature display, which is the first display on the left of the display area attempts to answer this question in a comprehensive way. (Fig. 14) This display and the eland frieze attempt to link the importance of the eland to the Drakensberg rock art (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003).

The next four displays represent the development of the San chronologically, by focusing on the significance of the eland and the cognitive development in artistic ability of the San (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003).

The first display is of the Early Stone Age. It houses a display box of early stone tools found in the region. (Fig. 15) This is a small display since not much research was done on the research on the tools of the Early Stone Age in the Drakensberg area (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). The organizers did not want to 'cross-pollinate' with findings in different areas where much work has been done, such as in the Cape because it is not representative of the Drakensberg area. Application of research from regions other than the Drakensberg may not only differ in space and time, but also generalize Southern San culture by rendering the San a single 'product'. This was explained in chapter two.

The Middle Stone Age display is set inside a replication of an archaeological dig. (Fig. 16a, 16b) The dig-site diorama is accompanied by a display box of the stone tools found from the middle Stone Age, and gives an explanation of the eland mortality rate. The eland mortality rate is explained by the number of eland bones found from this time that indicates that the eland was merely a food source for the San (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). In a display adjacent to the diorama is the earliest known evidence of San rock art. The Blombos Stone is housed in this display titled, 'Was there art?' Although this stone is from the Southern Cape, it is used as an indication of how early art was thought to be produced (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003).

The ice age display, which is next in the sequence, is the smallest and least informative display since no archaeological evidence has been found about the San at this time (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003).

The Late Stone Age display or 'People of the Eland' display makes up the majority of the interpretative display. This section includes seven separate displays that address a number of aspects of the life-ways of the San, for example, hunting and gathering, and honeycombs and ladders (Didima Display Text Draft, 2003). (Fig. 17a, 17b, 17c) The Late Stone Age is recognized as the period of intensification of the significance of the eland as less eland bones were found, and increased images of the eland were included in the rock paintings (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). There is a shift from not only the exhibition of archaeologically- sourced objects to the exhibition of rock art, (Fig. 18; Fig. 19) but also to the use of knowledge, publications and research of the San of that region (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). An example is the reference to Qing's stories.

The next three displays explain the rituals and cosmology of the Southern San including religious beliefs and practices, pigments, paint and preparation, and mythology (Didima Display Text Draft, 2003). (Fig. 20) There is evidence of such rituals and religion to be found in the images of the rock paintings and later, in the ethnographic evidence. For example, variations of painted eland (monochrome, bi-chrome, polychrome and shaded polychrome) are used to explain the pigment types used in the paintings as can be seen in the display 'Pigments, Paints and Preparation'. (Fig. 21) And Qing's description of the healing dance of the Drakensberg San that is similar to the trance dance explained by the Kalahari San research is used as regional evidence for Southern San religion (Didima Display Text Draft, 2003).

Moving up the ramp to the circular display area is a section dedicated to 'The People in the Stories' (Didima Display Text Draft, 2003) This display acknowledges the rock art researchers Harald Pager, Patricia Vinnicombe, and David Lewis-Williams, as well as San informant Qing (as well as Orpen), and San descendant Kerrik Thusi. (Fig. 22) As explained in chapter one, it is because of these people that rock art research and ethnographic material

from the Drakensberg region is available (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). Kerrik Thusi's role will be clarified in this chapter.

The last display, known as the 'Interaction display' gives an insight to the recent historical background of the Southern San (Didima Display Text Draft, 2003). This history includes the arrival of the Europeans to the Drakensberg area, and the interaction between the San and the African tribes that had moved into this region (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003) (Fig. 24) Evidence of this interaction is to be found in the images of the rock art as shown in the photograph of rock art titled, 'Arrival of Europeans heralded the introduction of horses to the Drakensberg'. (Fig. 23) This image shows three human figures dressed in traditional Western clothing, two of the figures with a black horse (in stirrups) running next to them, and the third on horseback. There is also evidence for the subsequent influence of the San people on these African groups, such as the rites and beliefs of the San that the African healers of today still hold with great esteem. The last display about the actual art is titled 'Apocalyptic art' and is thought to be the most recent form of art to be produced by the Southern San. (Fig. 25a, 25b) The concluding display acknowledges the San descendants who were involved in helping with the Centre, namely the Duma family from Kamberg and Kerrik Thusi. The Drakensberg Park is also recognized as a heritage site.

A temporary display dedicated to the San of today gives the San people of various communities in South Africa an opportunity to speak about themselves (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). It is up to these various San communities to contribute and update this display. I will discuss this display at a later stage in this chapter.

Modes of representation and display

A great deal of consultation prefaced decisions about the display and it was agreed that visual communication was of prime consideration (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003).

Firstly, the organizers had to assume that the target audience, namely children and adults making up the tourist community, know nothing about the Southern San and their material culture and consequently some basic aspects were to be represented to enable the viewer to

understand and relate to the information on display (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). For example, the average tourist may not even know what an eland looks like - the Centre's eland frieze is included to represent the functional and physical aspects of the antelope, not only for the San, but also in ecological and zoological contexts (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). (See fig. 13a, 13b)

To accommodate a range of audiences, the displays start with basic information, and then shift to complex interpretations (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). For example, in the 'People in the Stories' display the information presented about Lewis-Williams begins by explaining briefly that his studies have contributed enormously to the study of San rock art, and moves on to become more profoundly elaborated. Thus whilst the academic findings of the researcher are clearly articulated in the displays, the average person of the tourist community is able to grasp and relate to the information on display. The displays also emphasize the scientific basis of the interpretive data in relation to disciplines such as archaeology, anthropology, and ethnography.

Furthermore the displays are made 'readable' to the average person through the ordering of information, in terms of separate, sequenced display boxes that follow a timeline. (See fig. 42)

The chronological system of time has been used in museum practice in an endeavour to order existence, and to make existence easy to understand and translate for a largely Western audience (Gevorkian, <bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Cult/CultGevo.htm>, accessed on 13 March 2005). This method of display has been applied to 'Pre-Industrial' cultures especially, of which not much may be known except through archaeologically studies and recovered objects. The reason for this is because such objects can be placed into a sequence of time by dating them, consequently placing too much emphasis on Western episteme.

In the Centre, this method of display has been implemented as a means to explain the sequence of events in the historical duration of the existence of the Southern San. This was confirmed in the candidate's interviews; for instance periods in time were allocated individual displays and understood by the candidate as 'steps in understanding' (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). This ordering of Southern San social time becomes evident by following the sequence

of the displays through the Centre, starting at the Early Stone Age display and ending at a display of recent Southern San history and present Southern San knowledge. But, this type of ordering of 'cultural space' to give a 'real encounter' with the culture at hand denies the synchronous and diachronous wholeness of culture and the continuity of cultural development (Gevorkian, <bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Cult/CultGevo.htm>, accessed on 13 March 2005).

Chronological ordering of 'cultural space' explains events as single entities, for example, by placing hunting implements into one space in time, the viewer reads this as a practice that only happened at this point in time. And, the viewer may conclude that the San have not evolved from this state of technology. Gevorkian (<bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Cult/CultGevo.htm>, accessed on 13 March 2005) explains that the wholeness of a culture in history is not a single event, but the event, the physical achievement, the individual, the effect, and the development from this. The separation of displays into time frames may be to the benefit of the audience, but does not acknowledge Southern San existence as a growing and enduring culture by giving comparative features of past and present that can be achieved through synchronous and diachronous interpretations of time. In the Centres displays, the media used for display purposes include interpretive data that consists of texts, images, signage, photographs, objects and artifacts, and a diorama.

Interpretive data

The interpretive data consists of ethnographic and archaeological research and gives insight to the customs and rock paintings of the Southern San (represented in the displays by means of colour photographs) of the Southern San. According to Simpson (1996: 35) photographs must be placed into historical context due to the historical nature of ethnographic collections; the intention is to avoid creating an inaccurate impression of culture. In addition, Solomon (1999) states that 'archaeologists have traditionally sought in the rock paintings and engravings aspects of material culture' and it is the paintings that have enabled researchers to discern certain aspects of Southern San life-ways, and allow for interpretations to be made about the group's customs. For example the display specifically mentions images painted of fish as being 'accurate enough' that the researcher is able to identify the species depicted (Didima Display Text Draft, 2003). Thus, the interpretive data presented in the Centre stems from

research that correlates to the Southern San rock paintings; San informants have confirmed this over time. (See chapter one.)

Frans Prins (a former Natal Museum anthropologist) in interaction with the San Council of South Africa sanctioned the information content to be used as the interpretive data in the Centre (Wood, pc: 2003). The information included gives the audience an extensive view of the rock art of the Southern San (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). The focus was not only on one particular theory to the interpretation of rock art such as Lewis-Williams' trance-related theory (as outlined in chapter 1), but on all evidence (especially ethnographic) specific to Southern San material culture.

The interpretive data is not selective, indicative of the monolithic explanation that is not representative of San culture or that represents Southern San culture as a 'pure' form (Simpson, 1996: 35). This is evident in the displays that include references from publications (for example H. J. Deacon's *Human Beginnings in South Africa*) in the Early Stone Age display. The 'People in the Stories' display, as mentioned above, also attempts to contextualize the information represented.

The interpretive information on display is unique in that ethnographic references and research from the Drakensberg region is used only to present information that is relevant to the Southern San, and prevent common stereotypes and misconceptions that are often formed by using general information that has regularly been applied to the rock art of all Southern Africa (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). Such an example that may re-iterate popular stereotypes and thereby trivialize the material culture of the San is Wannenburg's (1979) publication where the front cover shows a San woman complete with 'traditional' clothing and a digging stick. (Fig. 29) On the other hand, using ethnographic information that does not relate to a specific time or place - for example the Bleek and Lloyd records - although there are correlations between the Cape !Xam San and the Drakensberg San, this information could not be used directly to translate Southern San culture in the context of the Didima Rock Art Centre.

The Didima Rock Art Centre is significant because it represents a specific locus of San beliefs and imagery that has hitherto been the case; there are limited ethnographic records on the Southern San, and this is the reason why Orpen's ethnographic records of Qing are mostly quoted in the displays (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). Emphasis falls on particular and unique aspects of Southern San life-ways that are still valued today. In this way, stereotypes are challenged and a history is completed for the San of that region (Lewis-Williams and Dowson, 1994: 398).

As well as using ethnographic records of the Drakensberg San, various organizers have consulted with San communities in South Africa and the San descendants of the Drakensberg area to gain additional information (Blackmore, pc: 2003). Workshops held with the Cultural Advisory Committee addressed the material to be presented to meet the criteria of representing the Southern San. Anthropologist Frans Prins, and archaeologist Joané Swart have actively been seeking out descendants from Eastern Mpumalanga to the Transkei. Prins has made contact with many of these descendants, amassing a collection of verbal information about the Southern San (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003).

An example is the Duma family from the Kamberg region, who has acknowledged the Southern San in their ancestry (Q. Duma, pc: 2003). (Fig. 30 is a photograph of Cynthia Duma.) Chief Duma protected and integrated the San into his community during the contact and conflict period between the Southern San and 'invading' cultures (Blackmore, pc: 2003). Qaphela and Khe Duma (2003) explained that their family still believes in the power of the fat of the eland, and that their grandfather had learned the skill of traditional healing as was practiced by the Southern San. Five members of the Duma family were subsequently involved in the construction of the Centre as artists in training when the artificial sandstone shelter was built.

Although there are no San groups living in this area today, there are still people in these areas who claim to have knowledge of the San (Jolly, 1997: 104). The most recent information gained is from the San descendant Kerrik Thusi (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). (Fig. 31) Thusi was born in a shelter near the source of the Senqu River in Lesotho and as a child, claimed to

have seen artists at work and the San visiting the caves of the Ndedema Gorge (Didima Display Text Draft, 2003). His San grandfather taught him the meaning of the art. Prins has interviewed Thusi for up to two and a half years and new light on certain aspects of San rock art has been discovered (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). Thusi is one of the last Southern San descendants who has traditional knowledge of San rock art and culture. Thusi is not himself an artist and being born at the beginning of the twentieth century, he would not of have seen or necessarily understood all styles of painted images, and it is also doubtful that he saw many artists at work (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003).

After two decades of the San being thought extinct in this region, Thusi has facilitated new and valuable information about San rock art. The new knowledge of the Drakensberg San is attributed to these descendants who are recognized in the displays. For example, the totemic animals of the San descendants of the Plessislaer region have been painted on the 'rock' walls entering the preview area leading to the auditorium. This recognized their roots in the San of the Giants Castle area (Coetzee, pc: 2004). The information presented emphasizes that the San are not 'extinct', as the understanding and importance of the paintings is still alive amongst the group's descendants.

In articulating the living heritage of the San in the Centre's displays, the San are represented as being a culture that is now both traditional and contemporary, and not merely the objectified social construct of others.

Photographs

San rock art is represented in the Centre mainly by means of photographs; these function as documents that are authentic artistic and visual ethnographic records. Implicitly, the Centre's intentions were to highlight two aspects of San imagery: both the art (as popular, accessible, subjective experience) and ethnography (as cerebral, iconographic science). Artistic, since they demonstrate the ability of the artist, and ethnographic since they are used in the Centre to translate Southern San culture.

An example is of the photograph depicting the ritual of rainmaking. (Fig. 26) This monochrome image is of a large 'rain animal', an eland, that is surrounded by human figures, some that hold hunting equipment and some that appear to be dancing. It shows the artists ability to capture this event in strongly visual terms, and also gives ethnographic evidence of the importance of this ritual in Southern San society. An example that illustrates that this may have been the organizers intention is the caption of the photograph 'San rock art depicting human forms reveals what types of clothing the San wore' (Didima Display Text Draft, 2003).

Since there is large quantity and variance of images of rock art in the Drakensberg that depict events that relate to aspects of Southern San life - such as religious beliefs and ritual - the Centre's organizers were able to use photographs as an ethnographic and historic document to explain the customs of the Southern San. Hence the public's curiosity to see various rock art images has been fulfilled. Most significantly, the visual potency and iconographic complexity of rock art is utilized as a platform to contest popular stereotypes and misconceptions of the San - especially of a child-like and not fully human species (Lewis-Williams and Dowson, 1994: 203). But, questions such as who the artist was as an individual in society, or what the artist intended the image to signify are not resolved in the documentation in the Centre, as what is known about the San artists is fragmentary and uncorroborated by oral testimony or witnesses. (Refer to the previous two chapters.)

Photographs are used as 'authentic documents' to represent the rock art in the displays because the actual art cannot be removed from the rock site. Buntman (museums.org.za/sam/conf/enc/buntman.htm), accessed 18 August 2003) explains that to the viewer, photographs are uncritically held to be faithful to the representation of reality, as they seem to capture natural and social elements with great fidelity. Photographs support claims to the 'truth' about space and identity, and thereby provide a privileged relationship with reality for the viewer (Buntman, museums.org.za/sam/conf/enc/buntman.htm), accessed 18 August 2003).

In the exhibition area of the Centre, the photographs of rock art are placed neatly into raised light boxes that act as separate display boxes to the interpretive data (that is the written texts)

presented. (See fig. 21) By displaying the photographs separately, there is an attempt to foreground their importance as both art and ethnographic document, making them the object to look at and critically discuss. Given that the photographs are raised and act separately from the written text, they come to share the same 'physical reality' as the viewer as a three dimensional object would, and therefore have more 'presence'. This can be compared to the inadequate foregrounding of the imposed structures at Main Caves at the Giants Castle Game Reserve that has resulted in the rock art becoming peripheral to these structures (Blundell, 1996: 58). Blundell (1996: 57) explains that the written texts that are presented on podiums inhabit the same space as the rock art, and that the emergence of these structures present themselves as items of interest rather than as facilitators for viewing the art.

The photographs include line drawings and transcriptions of rock art made by Patricia Vinnicombe in the 1970's, as well as photographs of rock art that have been taken of sites in the Drakensberg region (Swart, pc: 2004). (See fig. 25a) Patricia Vinnicombe's drawings were chosen for their significance as local documentary 'texts', and accessibility to interested persons as they are housed at the Natal Museum (Letley, pc: 2003). They were also chosen to honour Vinnicombe as a 'pioneer' in the study of rock art. Vinnicombe's drawings of rock art are highly skilled observations in their own right, and are also shown as evidence of – through the 1970's – the increased scientific approach to issues of indigeneity, indigenous heritage, and the historical documentation of the rock art in the Drakensberg region.

In conclusion, taking photographs of the original and drawings of rock art has conferred authenticity. Furthermore, in the interpretive display area, tourists are able to view images that 'stand for' the culture of their creators, and by viewing them, can appropriate and satisfy the desire to experience authenticity. In this way many painted rock art images can be viewed – even if cursorily - that would probably not of been seen unless a visitor went to a considerable number of painted sites.

Objects and artifacts

The archaeological implements on display are selected examples of an objective reality and are used as visual reference to the themes of Southern San paintings. For example, the Eland

Cave hunting kit gives reference to what the hunting kit in the painting titled 'Detailed depiction of hunting kit' looks like (Didima Display Text Draft, 2003). (See fig. 18) The organizers of the Centre have provided a physical reality of Southern San culture, to show the viewer what has manifest in the painted images, and in turn through the paintings to envisage how and why the objects were used. Hodge and D'Souza (1999) explain that objects on their own contain none of the desired meanings of the display if they are to give access to a way of life. The objects are not made to stand on their own but are contextualized by the paintings in order to communicate a sense of life history for the object, and thereby give access to the life of the Southern San for the viewer. (See fig. 19)

But, as discussed in chapter one of this dissertation, the connection of objects to the paintings may overemphasize the association of prosaic daily events – and possible literal meanings that the artist did not intend in representations of for example, ritual. For instance by providing the physical object of the bow and arrow, the viewer will relate this to the action of hunting and not to trance or ritual contexts that are known to have existed in Southern San society. Hence, deeper meanings, such as the use of symbols of hunting equipment in ritual contexts, have been excluded in the Didima Rock Art Centre. In conclusion, the mode of representation of the artifacts has been determined by science as will be discussed.

The archaeological collections were contributed by the Natal Museum teaching collection (Swart, pc: 2004), and some artifacts have been replicated to fulfill the visitor's desire to experience the 'real thing'. An example is the replication of the Eland Cave hunting kit. (See⁸) As well as being put on display to give visual reference to physical objects in the photographs of the rock art, the collections have also been put on display to show the technological and other material cultural developments of the San in parallel with their art.

The organizers have not tried to recreate the original archaeological or ethnological context for the artifacts on display because they are 'authentic objects'. In postmodern terms the typical museum practice of placing an object in context has rendered the exhibition of 'other'

⁸ The hunting kit was accessioned by the Natal Museum in the early 1900's after it was found by a local farmer on a ledge in Eland Cave near the Ndedema Gorge (Didima Display Text Draft, 2003). It is housed in the San display at the Natal Museum in Pietermaritzburg.

cultures tropeless and neutral, ideologically framing their history as discussed in chapter two (Butler, 1999: 15). The problem with representation by means of 'reconstructed' contexts for objects (such as dioramas) is that the active history of the non-West is suppressed and removed from current historical situations.

The infamous displays of San culture in the South African Museum, reviled in the *Miscast* exhibition (14 April – 14 September, 1996), typified early modernist anthropological displays: bodycasts of Bushmen were dressed in traditional clothing and were set in 'classical' static poses representative of life-ways. (Fig. 27) These casts were housed in dioramas that are reminiscent of 'a cabinet of a fantastic collection of curiosities' (Summers, 1975: 102). Such displays perpetuate the myth of difference of the culture on display since objects acquire new and special meanings by their settings, and when placed in a particular context may acquire connotations that might not be anticipated (Brawne, 1982: 19).

The organizers of the Didima Rock Art Centre have avoided the ideological framing of San history for the benefit of tourism by taking the objective stance of using disciplines based in the sciences to explain Southern San art and customs. The archaeological collections are set into display boxes; objects are catalogued and numbered, with a descriptive list of contents that is published separately from the objects. (Fig. 28) Accordingly, the artifacts appear 'classified' if they were archaeological objects in a research collection.

The Centre deploys science as the basis to prove or translate San existence and art. This idea is reinforced by a text caption found in the Early Stone Age display that states 'It is through the study of artifacts and their context that peoples of the past live again', in reference to the discipline of archaeology. Society thinks in terms of a 'real historical encounter of cultures' by using specific reflections of sciences, for example archaeology, upon other cultures and past culture especially (Gevorkian, <bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Cult/CultGevo.htm>, accessed 13 March 2005; note that Solomon, 1999: 127, has argued in similar ways).

Solomon (1999) argues that apart from addressing questions that concern the antiquity and chronology of image traditions, archaeologists have traditionally sought in the rock paintings

to aspects of material culture - such as hunting techniques or information on artifacts – as indicators of cultural and technological development. In the Didima Rock Art Centre, archaeology and ethnography co-opt Southern San existence, including the rock art (Didima Display Text Draft, 2003).

Diorama

In a re-creation of the original archaeological context, the dig site diorama is an effort to locate the viewer's experience within the realm of 'real' science. (See Fig. 16a, 16b) It is not the typical diorama that represents a choreographed scene with bodycasts or plastic models of people, but an attempt to motivate the audience to identify with this method of research (by the display of instruments used in archaeological excavations) and create an aura of being at an archaeological dig site.

This archaeological dig site can be viewed from two sides and is slightly elevated to show clearly the cross sectional view into the excavation site. Hence the viewer is able to interact on a visual level as there is the illusion that the viewer is in the excavation site and looking out into the 'cave' and beyond into the Drakensberg mountains. By creating this visually interactive display, people of all ages and nationalities are able to identify with the experience of discovery at an excavation site.

Intentional false notions of the San people are not reinforced, although romantic notions of discovering the 'wild expanses of Africa' (See Adams, 1857) have unfortunately been highlighted, and this in turn might be interpreted by the viewer as an attempt to conflate the San people to this idea of 'African mystery'. It is felt by the candidate that the backdrop to this setting - a large landscape photograph giving the spectator a view out of the cave overlooking the Drakensberg - may emphasize this stereotype.

In conclusion, the displays are visually stimulating and educational. In re-addressing issues and themes that relate to the Southern San, the appreciation of Southern San cultural heritage and the importance of the conservation of material cultural resources (namely the rock paintings) are facilitated. The static exhibition of the past has given way to communicating

information through exhibition rather than through the reconstruction of context. In essence, the ideological framing of the history of the San is not the experience on entering the interpretive display area where the audience is able to view displays that access the material culture of the Southern San.

Arguments articulated in representing the rock art

The question, 'what is being communicated in the Centre?' brings out uncertainties or contradictions that may affect the overall structure of the display.

In chapter two it was established how poor understanding of the nature of consumption in the contemporary world has led to negative visual themes of the San being produced in connection with cultural heritage and tourism (Blundell, 1995: 153). The marketing of the image of the San (this was outlined in chapter two) has been treated as a negative and superficial act, but it can also have positive implications as in the visual information displayed in the Centre.

Lewis-Williams and Dowson (1994) explain that the impact of exhibiting rock art is defined by what viewers believe they know about it, and stereotypes are the contribution that many viewers bring to their own construction of the arts meaning. As explained in chapter two, Buntman (museums.org.za/sam/conf/enc/huntman.htm, accessed 18 August 2003) attributes this to the view that popular culture holds about 'static' cultures that accepts the images not as a process of a complex belief system, but for the tourist to enjoy. In addition, rock art can be made to say anything depending on who has or assumes the authority to display the material (Lewis-Williams and Dowson, 1994: 398). It was up to the organizers of the display component to redress the stereotypes and misconceptions traditionally associated to the display of rock art.

As photographs are used extensively in the interpretive display area, the ensuing observations relate to the photographs. There is no dominant visual theme presented by the photographs as such, as the information on display does not focus on a single theory or interpretation of rock art (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). The display tries to represent a general view of the rock art

produced in the Drakensberg region to contextualize the culture and beliefs of the Drakensberg San. Hence, the eland theme is the only recurrent image in the displays since it was the most significant image to be painted by the Drakensberg San.

This Centre is devoted to Southern San rock art rather than a generalized San culture; hence, there are no visual depictions of San people in the entire static display area. (With the exception of the 'San of today' display.) The choice not to display images of San people was made because there are no San communities living in the Drakensberg today; Coetzec (pc: 2004) considers that to do so would have been a false representation of the Southern San. Given that there are no stereotyped images of the San such as the ones that are typically produced for mass consumption as discussed in chapter two, the images of rock art on display are not conflated to these stereotypes.

Display of photographs versus drawings of rock art

Some of the photographs, as mentioned, are of transcriptions of rock art that were painted by Patricia Vinnicombe in the 1970's. This may raise the question, 'Why photograph the paintings, but not put Vinnicombe's work on display?' The reason for this is that Vinnicombe's images are in themselves an historical document of the art, and in some instances are the only known record of some of the paintings that have vanished. Hence, Vinnicombe's drawings of rock art are a part of the 'ethnographic meaning' of the San works, and need to be preserved as well as the rock art. Subjecting them to display will render them even more ephemeral within their harsh environments (Letley, pc: 2003).

Furthermore, drawings of rock art are culturally bound, as has been explored in chapter two. For this reason perhaps the organizers of the display area should have included one of Vinnicombe's original drawings into the display.

Making use of transcriptions of rock art for display purposes - as opposed to using photographs for display - was probably avoided for two reasons. Firstly, because when making reproductions, small details may unintentionally be left out that may hold significance (Dowson, 1996: 318). For example, Stow's (1930) drawings in which he left out images from

painted sites, or parts of images that he felt were not necessary for reproduction (Giers, 2000: 117). Secondly, reproductions of the art may imply a simplistic connection between the Bushmen and their art, as discussed in chapter two, and the viewer becomes confused with idealizations of Bushman-ness (Buntman, <museums.org.za/sam/conf/enc/buntman.htm>, accessed 18 August 2003) Displaying representations of rock art by means of photographs however reduces culturally bound stereotypes that accompany the replication of the art.

Problematic issues associated to photographs of rock art

But in the context of the documentation centre, photographs too can pose a number of problems. In the past, as explored in chapter two, what Gordon (1997) refers to as 'slick merchandising' of images of the San for the tourist market has led to the creation of 'reality' that is thought to fulfill the needs of the viewer to authenticate the 'other' (Gordon, 1997: book cover). This has resulted in the choreographing of images, such as those produced for the Denver African Expedition (1925).

The organizers of the display component of the Centre have not tailored certain images by borrowing images from a number of painted sites to choreograph new paintings, but have used separate images taken from different rock art sites in the Drakensberg. By presenting separate rock art images, the art is viewed as separate 'entities' of art, focusing on certain features of the whole painting. Hence, the images are juxtaposed as serial images in ways completely foreign to their original context. The images thereby become snapshots of Southern San 'life-ways' by fulfilling the viewers desire to witness and indulge in the curiosity about the way that the Southern San lived (See Buntman and Bester, 1997).

It could be argued that the by selecting the separate images to photograph that the images are not representative of the meaning of an entire painted rock art panel. As explained in chapter one, each individual image has been found to be relevant to the interpretation of a painted panel. But, it was not the intention that the display component houses a narrative description of the painted panels, the images in the display area are intended to represent certain themes considered highly significant to the Southern San (Swart, pc: 2004). The Didima Rock Art Centre themes include

- changes made by the Drakensberg San to their environment, such as grass burning to attract grazing animals
- seasonal movement and its relation to ritual activity and rock painting in the Drakensberg
- the building of ladders to reach honeycombs
- the clothing that the Drakensberg San wore (Didima Display Text Draft, 2003).

It could also be argued that the images were selectively chosen to place them into context by fitting the image to the interpretive data. The evidence given by the San descendants and the ethnographic information that has been sourced proves this argument to be inconclusive, as comparison of these data sources has revealed the importance of the paintings over time (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003).

The popular stereotypes related to San rock art are not reinforced, and the images shown in the Centre are not sensationalized as they were in the past, for example, for the Denver African Expedition. The separate images of the rock art override the entrenchment of mythification of the Southern San. The 'typical' image of the hunter with his bows and arrows has been eliminated, and focus lies in images that relate to contextual features that are specific to the Southern San, such as the importance of bees and honeycombs. As well as being a source of food, according to some researchers, bees and honey symbolize power and potency, and the San also believed the meat of the eland to be as sweet as honey (Didima Display Text Draft, 2003). Therefore bees and honey are validated in the social and ritual context of the Southern San.

Captions

The photographs are described by captions that direct us to view the images in certain ways. The photograph titled, 'Rainmaking Scene' is again used as an example (See fig. 26) The captions describe certain activities that are taking place in the images, or certain objects that are shown in the images, as opposed to a title that might be found accompanying a photograph from the Denver Africa Expedition. An example is, 'Cadle with two !Kung males'. This

caption implies that the !Kung men are gender classified as animals might be in genre imagery.

Culturally bound assumptions pre-suppose meaning and the organizers have had to be cautious in the way that they have worded these descriptions as text loads the picture and gives it 'meaning' (Gordon, 1997: 3). The organizers are being presumptuous by labeling the images because as mentioned before, rock art images had meaning related to social contexts within the Southern San community. Hence, the paintings may not have literal meaning as contemporary society might see it.

In order to protect the paintings and their locations, the rock art site from which the image originates has not been disclosed in the displays; this prevents people from going to find the actual rock art sites and causing damage (Swart, pc: 2004).

The reproduced images are not the size of the actual images as would be seen at the rock art site from which they were sourced; they have been magnified in some instances to focus on the curator's issues or topics. However, the scale should have been included with the caption to give an idea of the actual size of the paintings and for reasons of scientific accuracy. This would also avoid the relation of the size of the image to postcard images, which might connect the photographs and in turn the rock paintings to the consumerism of the Southern San. (See Buntman, 1995 and 2002.)

By representing the paintings in photographs, the organizers of the Centre have attempted to redress misconceptions about Southern San rock art such as their conflation to the stereotype of 'the Bushman', but problematic issues of display, re- and de-contextualization have also been identified. The photographs are unable to capture the actual nuances experienced at a real painted site, but they do give a vivid glimpse into the variety and quality of Southern San paintings.

The San of Today display

The 'San of today' display comprises a selection of themes that relate to the San communities that live in Africa today (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). At present, these include the San descendants in the Drakensberg area, and San communities in Botswana, Namibia, and the Northern Cape. It is a two-dimensional display that presently shows photographs and articles that have been contributed by various San communities. (Fig. 32) It is a temporary display - in that the information presented can be quickly changed. At present, the information on display includes topics such as the assessments of the needs of the Angolan San, the San of Africa, land and cultural resources, San youth, and issues of cultural heritage in education.

This display aims to give a 'voice' to the San people of today so that the visitor is informed about contemporary communities and is made aware that the San are not 'extinct' or living in prehistoric bliss in a modern world (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). The display considers the cultural sensitivities and social needs of the San in a concerted effort not to alienate them from the presentation of their own heritage.

Despite the above overview however, the candidate found it to be an ill-presented display. Firstly, the information is stuck onto a red tapering obelisk that stands in middle of the circular room that leads off of the main display area. The display seems misplaced, as it is not of the same quality as the permanent displays. The section lacks a thematic title; there is no contextual introduction – let alone one that encourages the visitor to question the reasons for the display and the choice of themes.

Furthermore, certain long-standing stereotypes may be reinforced if a community or individuals within that community are allowed to display what they think is significant about their people. The tendency might be to focus on certain aspects about their community that may reinforce, for example, impoverished, struggling minorities. Although there is reference to achievements of these San communities in the display, there is little recognition given to a wide variety of contemporary cultural sites of production, including the fields of science, technology, and the arts.

The Centre promotes San rock art and it would be interesting to see a display on the art produced in San communities today. As an example, the website (ikfoundation.org/art.html), accessed 25 April 2005) mentions that 'In the 1990's, approximately 5500 people from the !Xu and Khwe tribes moved from Angola and settled in Schmidtsdrift Camp – a canvas town. An art centre was established in 1993 to help these alienated peoples.' Perhaps examples of art from such communities will be exhibited on the 'San of today' display in the future.

Auditorium

On leaving the interpretive display area, the visitor walks around a 'rock wall' into a small 'cave room'. This room acts as a congregation area where people are able to sit - on slabs shaped like natural rock – to listen to recordings of traditional San folklore stories that are based on Qing's ethnographic material (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). There are 'rock walls', a 'glowing fire', and 'stars' above in the blackened sky. (Fig. 36) This artifice results in the feeling of 'drifting off to another time and space' intended to represent a traditional fireside storytelling in a San community. In effect, this is a 'preview' area, intended to focus and prepare the audience for the audiovisual experience that follows.

After the presentation, the doors to the auditorium are opened by a guide and the visitor then enters into a large cave overhang setting that also gives the illusion of sitting in a large cave. (Fig. 33a, 33b, 33c, 33d) A darkened room, the lights are dimmed for the audiovisual presentation projected on the smooth upper 'cave' walls on three split screens. On the lower cave wall is a panel reproduced from Botha's Shelter in Ndedema Gorge. As well as providing a backdrop or screen for the audiovisual presentation, the auditorium also provides an area for lectures by experts on rock art.

The sandstone overhang, which is approximately thirty metres in width and fifteen metres in height, was constructed using forty-five tons of cement around two kilometres of steel reinforcement (Hughes, 2004: 23). (Fig. 34) Approximately five hundred square metres of rock surface have been replicated, including the covering of the floor space in front of the theatre seating.

The artificial cave involved six months of work commencing in March of 2003 and ending before the official opening of the Centre on the 24th of September 2003 (Coetzee, pc: 2004). Designer Lawrie Raubenheimer, three trained artists, five San descendants from the Kamberg region and people from the local community carried out the work.

The surface cement was treated to resemble sandstone; specifically intended to reproduce the appearance and feel of rock overhangs to be found in the Drakensberg region. The designer and artists spent some weeks walking to and exploring actual caves and rock surfaces in order to replicate these surfaces as accurately as possible. These direct observational experiences were translated by the artists into a close replication of a 'real' sandstone overhang, complete with pressure planes and flakes of rock that might unexpectedly drop on the visitor's head. (Fig.37) Surface treatments reproduced geological features such as holes in the roof caused by water action (Fig. 38c), mineral deposition, abrasion and fallen and shattered rocks usually found at the base of the cave walls (Fig.35). There is minute detail in the reconstruction, including features such as roots growing through the cracks in the rock surface, watermarks (Fig. 38a), lichen growing on the rock, and deposits of shale (Fig. 38b).

By reconstructing the environment of an actual rock art site, the designers and planners have succeeded in gratifying visitors' desire to visit a rock art site. The desire to visit a rock art site is the hinge upon which the Centre's replica rests - such as the Disney movie is the reason that visitors wish to visit Disneyland (See Baudrillard, 2001). The cave was built with the intention that tourists will visit this 'cave' and its replicas of San paintings in order to protect the original painted sites (Muirhead, 2003: 33).

The Centre also stimulates theatrical experience by using sensory cues such as sight, sound and touch to provide an illusion; the audience participates in the simulation and is controlled through conventional dramatic sensory stimulation – using controlled lighting, recorded sounds (including eland running, thunder and singing), visual simulation (the sandstone shelter), and enactment (through documentary video for example it is shown through the paintings how the San people were thought to change to animals during trance). Hence fantasy, escapism, and entertainment that are part of conventional theatrical experience is

heightened by synesthesia, meaning ‘joined sensation’, affecting the emotions, reasoning, and conscious of the observant (Westbrook,

edu/Dept/GradSch/Mcnair/Summer02/Westbrook.html], accessed 13 March 2005).

Sensopathic experience relies on special effects and reproduced items that are three-dimensional and thus allowing for understanding of spatial information (Hodge and D’Souza, 1999: 59), and this experience tricks the mind into believing that the individual is immersed in another time and, or place.

In being able to examine and touch the ‘cave’, Mazel (1981) explains the importance of physical contact, as this type of interaction facilitates learning and a personal connection to the surface that the paintings were painted on. The organizers wanted to tap into the power inherent in material culture, the ‘power of the real place and the real thing’ (Moore, 1997: 135). That is, they have created the ‘real place’ in constructing a San rock art shelter, and the ‘real thing’ by recreating the exact geological features of a sandstone shelter.

The choice to recreate a context has facilitated an emotive experience for the viewer, as they are able to understand and relate on a personal level to the significance of a painted site. The simulacrum of a sacred space, the rock shelter with its geological features enhances an immersion for the viewer that brings to the mind the ‘feeling’ of the geological space and spiritual dimensions that existed for the Southern San. The viewer is able to imagine that they are at a real painted site, a site in which the San painted on the rock surface in order to reach the spirit world and held to be a sacred or powerful place (Blundell, 1996: 149).

History has been presented in a popular way by the recreation of the sense of nostalgia⁹ experienced at a real rock art site, but it has been done in a way that the viewer will relive what they have seen and heard.

⁹ The word nostalgia is used in this paragraph with its postmodern meaning, ‘longing but with no memory’. See *The Tourist Image: Myth and Myth Making in Tourism* by T. Selwyn.

Botha's Shelter

The replication of Botha's Shelter at the Didima Rock Art Centre was painted by Lawrie Raubenheimer, a local artist with experience in reproducing rock art for the tourist market (Raubenheimer, pc: 2003). (This does not qualify Raubenheimer in terms of authenticating the San – or rather representing the 'other' – but these are issues that I will not pursue here.) It was required that Raubenheimer's painting was faithful to the well-known panel produced by Harald Pager. (Fig. 39) The panel is a 'copy of a copy' in two modes of representation: of Pager's painting, and of the San shelter as it has survived to the present.

Before the Didima Rock Art Centre paintings could be executed, three weeks of preparation of the panel in cement produced an exact geological likeness of the Botha's Shelter rock surface. Painted on this, Raubenheimer's Didima Rock Art Centre work is also an exact scale reproduction (his replication of Pager's copy is approximately one metre in width). The paintings were reproduced by blowing them up to full size with the use of grids and a projector, and transposed by tracing the images onto the wall of the cave (Raubenheimer, pc: 2003). Juxtaposed next to the replication of Pager's work is a section of the Botha's Shelter panel which Raubenheimer has represented as it is today; the differences between the two images highlight the deleterious effects of time (and tourism) on the paintings in the forty or so years since Pager copied this panel (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). (Fig. 40a, 40b)

The reason for the face of Botha's Shelter being integrated into the 'cave' is that it is a large panel with many images, including many examples of images of the painted eland in different arrangements (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). (Fig. 41a, 41b, 41c, 41d, 41e) Most of the images of the panel relate to the audiovisual presentation and thereby encourage the viewer to compare, contrast, and interpret the images of the panel for ones-self. The viewer can experience this panel without going to the real site, thereby facilitating the preservation of the original paintings.

The reproduction of original rock art images poses several problems - as discussed with the display component of the Centre. Dowson (1996) attributes problems about the reproduction of shelter paintings to two factors. Firstly if the images are chosen selectively, popular

misconceptions of the art - such as its association to 'hunting magic' - are reinforced (Dowson, 1996: 318 in Skotnes, 1996). For this reason, most of the Botha's Shelter panel was chosen to be represented; firstly from Pager - a source known to be faithful to the images and their rock surface (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). Secondly, as discussed in chapter two, rock art continues to be simplified and stylized for tourist markets - hence leaving out small nuances and features that are important to the interpretation and understanding of the art - in effect, rendering the art with no contextual intent (Dowson, 1996: 318 in Skotnes, 1996).

In the Botha's Shelter reproduction, every detail that Pager faithfully copied has been included, from each 'thread of light' to a small bee. (See Fig. 41b) With such attention to detail, the viewer may ask, 'Why not exhibit a panel of original rock art, such as has been done in the Natal Museum?' This is because the exhibition of rock art is fraught with a number of problems that relate to typical museum display. Lewis-Williams and Dowson (1994) explain that the display of rock art in the typical museum context has in the past been in 'temporary, uninformative cases with triviality for explanations' (Lewis-Williams and Dowson, 1994: 388). To display a rock art panel in a display case objectifies the work as an archaeological specimen: a piece of rock with some paintings on it that proves the achievement of an 'ancient' society. Furthermore, it would be misleading to the public to set an original panel, especially if it is not of the Ndedema Gorge region, into the artificial cave, as it would re-iterate the popular misconception that the art is exclusively for the tourist's pleasure and that it manifests no other significance.

The audiovisual presentation

At present, 2004, there is one audiovisual presentation on show in the sandstone cave auditorium of the Didima Rock Art Centre. The 'Valley of the eland' multimedia presentation offers a general context for the San images on the sandstone shelters of the Drakensberg: the special focus is the eland and its spiritual significance to the San (Didima Rock Art Centre brochure, 2003).

The fifteen-minute presentation offers a 'reflective and challenging insight into the history and culture of the Drakensberg San', and much of its interpretation is deduced from the rock art of

the region (Muirhead, 2003: 33). For example, the carefully painted and prolific images of the eland are used to explain the significance of this antelope to the San people; featured are Southern San styles of painted eland, and its importance in trance and ritual. The information for this presentation was assembled by Mark Coetzee of KZN Wildlife and Ben Smith of the Witwatersrand Rock Art Research Institution in consultation with the Cultural Advisory Committee (Coetzee, pc: 2004). An independent design studio from Johannesburg, (*The Studio*), was contracted to composite the images for the audiovisual presentation.

The images were sourced in and around the Ndedema Gorge, others from current research and publications on rock art (Coetzee, pc: 2004); by anthropologists and archaeologists, notably with the help of San descendants (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003). The images demonstrate an obvious and specific relation to the Drakensberg San, and they reinforce aspects of the art that is specific to this locale. For example, paintings of bees and beehives that are unique to the rock art of the Southern San (explained earlier in this chapter) are included in the presentation. (See figures 41b, 41c, and 41e) The explanations of Qing, Orpen's San informant, were also integrated into the presentation to locate the Southern San 'voice' (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003).

An audiovisual presentation that takes place within a special setting such as the cave auditorium of the Centre contributes to the interpretive function. Brawne (1982:134) states that this can be achieved by 'setting a context, developing an idea, allowing comparison with material not in the museum, creating an atmosphere, and simplifying an explanation'. The Didima Rock Art Centre uses video and three data projectors in conjunction with illuminated images, sound effects, lighting effects, and change in colour and light to enhance its interpretive function (Coetzee, pc: 2004). The audience is surprised and delighted with sensory effects as they are subjected to a Berg storm, complete with 'rain' and 'lightning', and the herds of eland running across the three split screens.

The use of multimedia technology in museum practice has enormous dramatic advantages. Hukill (ctimes.com/home.html), accessed 13 March 2005) explains that multimedia by its very nature engages multiple senses, with the use of skillfully combined imagery, sound, and text to capture the audiences attention more decisively than any of those elements alone.

'Studies have shown that people remember 20% of what they hear, 40% of what they see and hear, but 70% of what they see, hear and do. In other words, combining media is good, but increased interactivity even better' (Hukill, www.times.com/home.html], accessed 13 March 2005). The more senses that people engage in when absorbing information, the more they comprehend and remember.

'Experiential' multi-media environments are devised and designed with the well-known goal of influencing the viewer (Kräutler, 1999: 64). As well as heightening the educational and entertainment experience, Kräutler (1999) explains that the use of such technology includes opportunities for 'first hand' experiences offered by original theatrical and authentic three-dimensional effects that exploit multi-sensory possibilities, for example, the contrast of real sizes (eland antelope) and the dramatization of tiny elements (such as the magnification of a flying bee). The audience also connects objects with their aural familiars such as lightning and thunder, or a flying bee with a buzzing sound. Thus the audience engages with the 'objects on display' through the senses, and through definite physical and spatial relations (muscumaustralia.org.au/conference2003/messham-muir.htm], 2003). The object is not only understood intellectually and cognitively, but experientially too, and might easily evoke an empathetic identity with those who had once experienced the same in real life.

Furthermore, Kräutler (1999) states that 'several facets of a topic can be presented at different levels of pre-knowledge and in varying degrees of scientific treatment'. This enables visitors to choose and to organize information retrieval, and to consume it as they please. Imagination, sensory and cognitive abilities are brought together through the experience, and the visitor extends or reinforces the knowledge. Intensive special effects does not disguise the meaning behind the presentation, but rather holds the audience in awe by representing spiritual dimensions at intersections of San natural environment and cultural practices, personalizing their experience and thereby facilitating a new understanding of Southern San culture. The organizers may have created a new stereotype of the San as mystical, ethereal beings in their deployment of exaggerated audiovisual and sensory effects.

Coetzee is presently working on the second Didima Rock Art Centre audiovisual production that is to focus on the Ndedema Gorge (Coetzee, pc: 2004). A total of five different productions are planned, each of about fifteen minutes in length that will focus on specific aspects of the Drakensberg San. This will include Pager's research on the rock art of the Ndedema Gorge and on present San communities and descendants (Swart and Prins, pc: 2003).

The Centre is an example of how sensory stimulation, time and space categories, as well as movement can be used to attract the audience's attention to a certain message (Hodge and D'Souza, 1999: 59). The use of multimedia facilitates an educational and emotive experience for the viewer, enabling them to 're-live' the spiritual dimensions that the Southern San experienced at a painted site. Furthermore, the specific relation of the information that is presented in the audiovisual presentation to the Southern San locates the information to the region.

Conclusion

This dissertation set out to evaluate the Didima Rock Art Centre's strategy to promote the conservation of rock art by educating the tourist community through various means of visual communication.

Chapter one introduced San rock art by exploring the development of the understanding of the art through time, highlighting the misconceptions and simplistic meanings ascribed to the art. On the basis of recent research done by rock art researchers such as Patricia Vinnicombe and David Lewis-Williams, Southern San rock art was explained as being far more complex in 'meaning' than thought before. It was established that tourism is the main threat to rock art in the Drakensberg region, and from this that visitors to rock art sites need to be convinced that rock paintings are relevant. This is a crucial concept that underpins the Didima Rock Art Centre's development.

In chapter two the aims and objectives of the Centre were established. With specific reference to Aron Mazel's thesis (1981), it was explored how these aims could be achieved. The principle of 'cultural tourism' was introduced and explained as the interaction of tourism and heritage management. Both are intended to be mutually beneficial with regard to the Centre. In relation to these concepts, certain elements that the Centre should address in the representation of the Southern San were recognized and critically examined. These included issues such as authenticity, visitor experience, San identity, and visual communication with regard to museum practice. It was found from the research that issues regarding visual communication, such as perceptions created by the means of visual media for the public have strong influence on tourism and heritage communication.

Chapter three critically analyzed the representation of the Southern San in the Didima Rock Art Centre with specific investigation of the museum's display practices. Exploration of the displays considered the interpretive data, photographs, objects and artifacts, the transcribed rock art panel, the audiovisual presentation, and simulated cave environment. In discussion, it

was apparent that the overall representation of the Drakensberg San was productive in encapsulating the material culture and customs of the San.

In redressing issues and themes that relate to the Southern San, the appreciation of Southern San cultural heritage and the importance of the conservation of rock art are facilitated. In essence, the ideological framing of the history of the San is not the experience on entering the Didima Rock Art Centre, where the audience is able to view displays that access the material culture of the Southern San and complete the living history of this group.

The interpretive data consists of ethnographic and archaeological research and also stems from research that correlates to the Southern San rock paintings. San informants have confirmed this over time, from Qing in the 1930's to Kerrik Thusi at present. In articulating the living heritage of the San in the Centre's displays, the San are represented as being a culture that is both traditional and contemporary, and not merely the objectified social construct of others.

Rock art is represented in the Centre by means of colour photographs that display the traditional life-ways of the Southern San. In representing the painted images in photographs, the organizers of the Centre have attempted to redress misconceptions about the Southern San – such as the conflation of rock art images to the stereotype of 'the Bushman'.

The information presented is comprehensive and clearly states current research and thinking in a way that a general audience can understand and identify with specific disciplines or research methods. The ideological framing of the history of the San for the benefit of tourism has been dealt with by focusing on disciplines based in the sciences.

The marketing image presented for tourism foregrounds the Southern San of the Drakensberg region. As mentioned before, information that is unique to the Southern San has been presented instead of general information concerning the San people. The conflation of rock art to the popular misconceptions of the San people has by this means also been redressed.

Moreover, the visitor's desire to visit a rock art site and to 'authenticate' the experience of viewing Southern San material culture has been gratified. The curators of the displays within the Centre have offered objects and images that stand for the culture of their creators, thereby responding to the audience's nostalgia to appropriate authenticity. The audience is also controlled through sensory effects employed in multimedia, for example, being able to touch the cave and re-live the 'experience' that the San might of at a painted site. Hence the use of multimedia facilitates an educational and emotional experience for the viewer, enabling them to 're-live' the spiritual dimensions that the Southern San experienced at a painted site.

Furthermore the specific relation of information presented in the audiovisual presentation to Southern San locates the information to the region.

The outcomes of this Centre are encouraging, although problems have been identified, these include:

- the use of a chronological system of time to explain Southern San existence
- the use of sciences such as archaeology and ethnography to justify Southern San existence and art
- culturally bound assumptions that relate to the transcription of rock art and use of captions to describe the rock art
- the scale of the images being excluded, and resulting in the photographs being related to postcards and in turn consumerising the San
- the San of today exhibition. This display aims to give a 'voice' to the San people of today, but the display was found to be ill-presented by the candidate
- the possible entrenchment of new stereotypes of the San by use of visual and sensory effects achieved through multimedia technology

Glossary of terms

Anthropology: The study of human origins, institutions, and beliefs (Makins, 1994: 22).

Archaeology: The study of ancient cultures from their physical remains (Makins, 1994: 27).

Art: Creation of works of beauty, especially paintings or sculpture (Makins, 1994: 29).

Artifact: Something made by man (Makins, 1994: 29). Relic; object; work of art (Word Thesaurus).

Artificial: Man-made; not occurring naturally; made in imitation of something natural (Makins, 1994: 30). False; fake; reproduction; synthetic; simulated; imitation (Word Thesaurus).

Authentic: Known to be real; genuine. Authenticity- to establish as genuine (Makins, 1994: 35).

Cognitive: Act or experience of knowing or acquiring knowledge (Makins, 1994: 98).

Colonialism: The policy of acquiring and maintaining colonies (Makins, 1994: 99).

Colonization- the act or practice of colonizing; the state of being colonized (Wood, 1931: 132).

Context: Circumstances of an event or fact (Makins, 1994: 110).

Culture: Ideas, customs and art of a particular society; particular society (Makins, 1994: 126).

Documentation: A piece of paper, booklet, e.t.c, providing information, especially of an official nature. To support (a claim) with evidence (Makins, 1994: 158).

Ethnography: The study of human races (Makins, 1994: 185).

European: (Person) from Europe (Makins, 1994: 185). Pertaining to Europe (Wood, 1932: 259).

Exhibit: To present to view; to show; to display; to manifest publicly; to present formally (Wood, 1932: 264).

Form: The shape or external appearance of a body (Wood, 1932: 296).

Iconography: The science or art of the representation; especially on ancient sculptures: real or ideal objects by images (Wood, 1932: 357). The branch of art history dealing with the identification, description, classification, and interpretation of subject matter of the figurative arts (Chilvers, 1996: 254).

Image: Representation of a person or thing in art or literature; mental picture produced by the imagination or memory; impression people have of (Makins, 1994: 271).

- Interaction:** To act on or in close relation with each other (Makins, 1994: 285).
- Interpret:** To explain; unfold; present the meaning of; translate into intelligible words (Wood, 1932: 381). Interpretation- to explain the meaning of; convey the meaning of. Interpretative- collected or known by interpretation: explanatory.
- Metaphor:** Figure of speech in which a term is applied to something it does not literally denote in order to imply a resemblance (Makins, 1994:342).
- Myth:** A legend, magnified by tradition, and given out as historical, affecting the origin of a race or a religion, and expressive of primitive beliefs or forms of belief; a fable (Wood, 1932: 456).
- Nostalgia:** Sentimental longing for the past (Makins, 1994: 366).
- Object:** Physical thing (Makins, 1994: 370).
- Objective:** Existing in the real world outside the human mind; not biased (Makins, 1994: 370).
- Perception:** The act of perceiving; intuitive judgement (Makins, 1994: 395).
- Presentation:** The act of presenting; representation (Wood, 1994: 519). Appearance: arrangement: staging; production (Word Thesaurus).
- Primitive:** Of an early simple stage of development; basic, crude (Makins, 1994: 424). Term used with various meanings in the history and criticism of the arts. In its widest sense it is applied to the art of societies out of the (great) Western, Near Eastern, and Oriental civilizations (Chilvers, 1996: 424).
- Real:** Actually being or existing; genuine, authentic (Wood, 1932: 546). Implying a desire to depict things accurately and objectively (Chilvers, 1996: 434).
- Reconstruction:** Use evidence to recreate; rebuild (Makins, 1994: 449).
- Representation:** To stand for; act as a delegate for; symbolize: make out to be; portray, as in art (Makins, 1994: 456).
- San:** The Nama word for 'Bushman': it means something like 'vagabond' or 'cattle-less wanderer'; it is therefore also pejorative (Lewis-Williams, 2003: 123).
- Shape:** The outward form of an object; the way in which something is organized (Makins, 1994: 492).
- Simulacra:** Models of reality without origin or reality (Baudrillard, 1988: 166). (See Simulacrum).

Simulacrum: A place or construction that plays at being an appearance, or bears no relation to any reality, such as Disneyland (Baudrillard, 1988: 171).

Simulate: To make pretence of; have the appearance of; imitate the conditions of (a particular situation) (Makins, 1994: 500). To assume the mere appearance of something without the reality (Wood, 1932:604).

Style: Manner of writing, speaking, or doing something; shape or design (Maklins, 1994: 534).

Stone Ages: Prehistoric period when tools were made of stone (Makins, 1994: 529).

Subject: Person or thing being dealt with or studied (Makins, 1994: 535).

Subjective: Based on the personal feelings or prejudices (Makins, 1994: 535).

Western: Of or in the West. Westernize- to adapt to the customs and culture of the West (Makins, 1994:604).

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Figure 41d. Raubenheimer, L. *Eland facing the viewer*, 2003. Didima Rock Art Centre. Photograph: Amanda Storey, 2004.

Figure 41e. Raubenheimer, L. *Eland 'running' with bee's*, 2003. Didima Rock Art Centre. Photograph: Amanda Storey, 2004.

Figure 42. Storey, A. *Diagram showing the sequence of displays in the Didima Rock Art Centre*, 2004. Photograph: Amanda Storey, 2004.



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

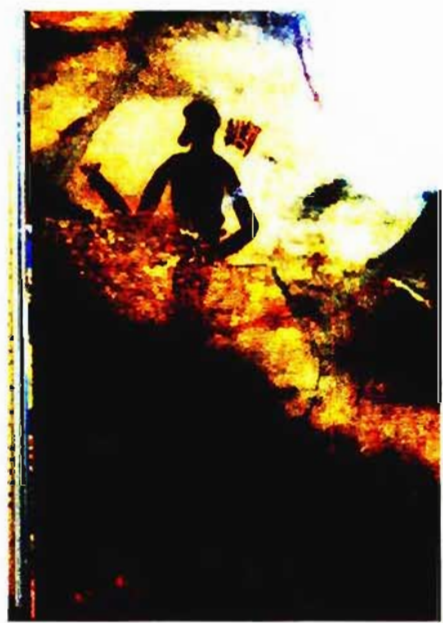


Figure 5



Figure 6

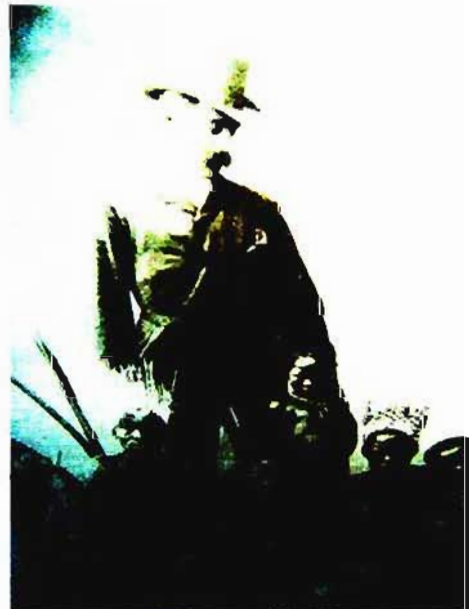


Figure 7



Figure 8

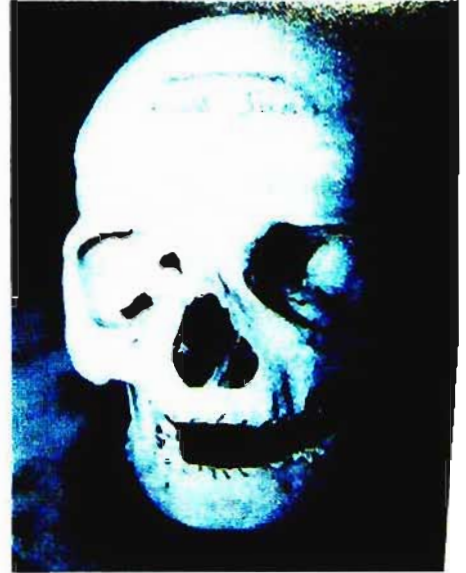


Figure 9

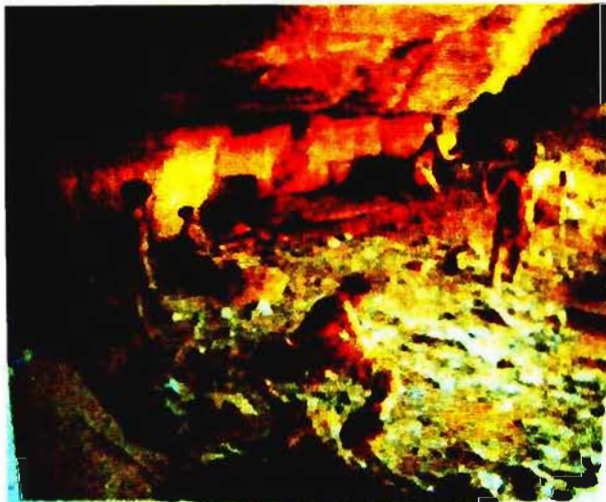


Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 16a



Figure 16b



Figure 17a



Figure 17b



Figure 17c



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22

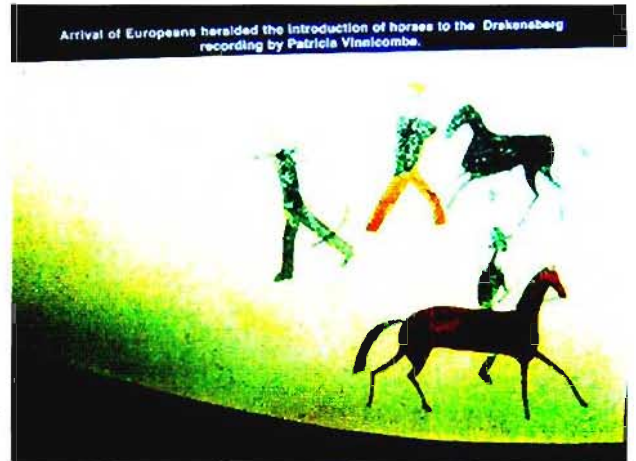


Figure 23



Figure 24



Figure 25a

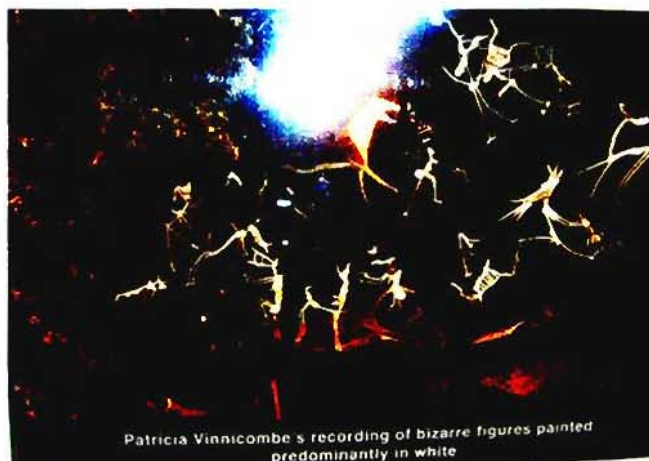


Figure 25b



Figure 26



Figure 27



Figure 28

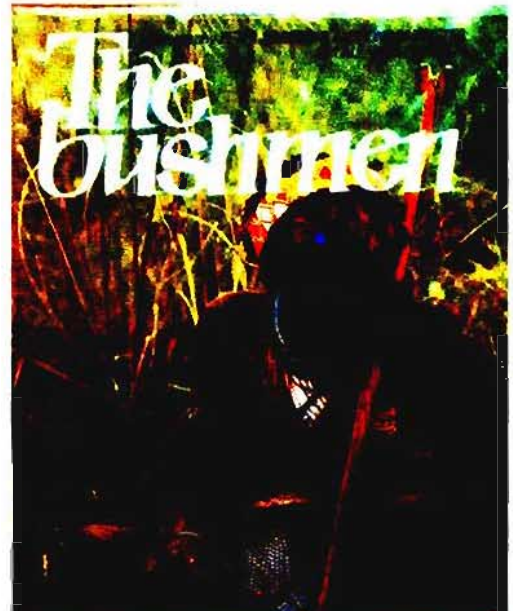


Figure 29



Figure 30



Figure 31



Figure 32



Figure 33a

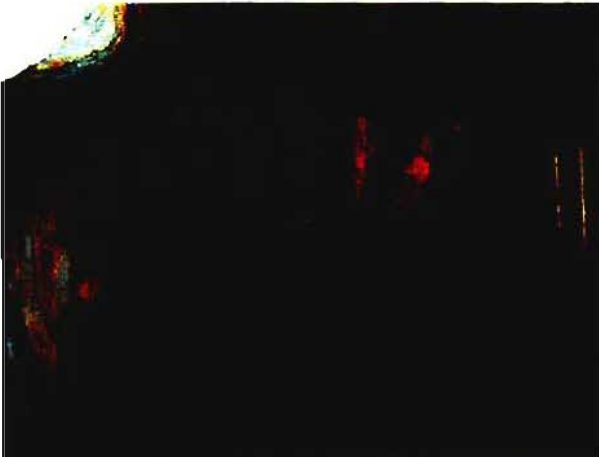


Figure 33b



Figure 33c



Figure 33d



Figure 34

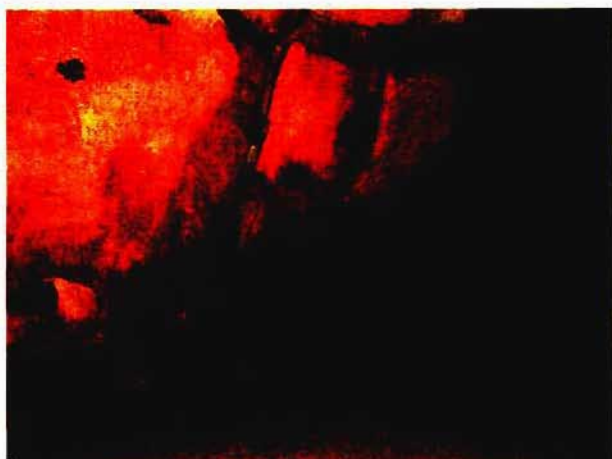


Figure 35

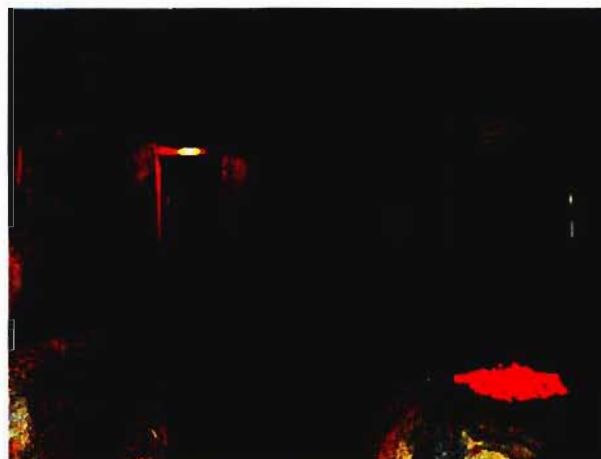


Figure 36



Figure 37



Figure 38a

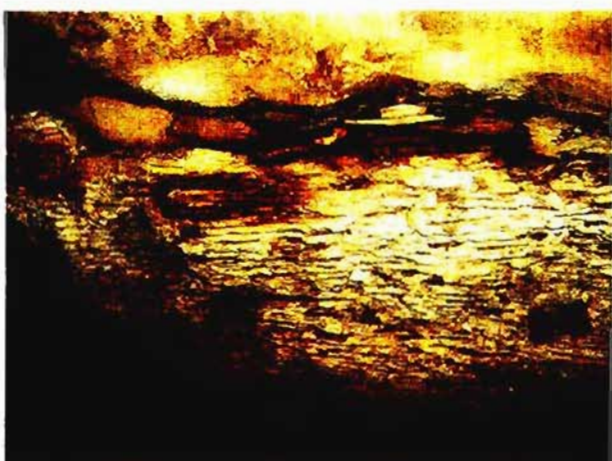


Figure 38b

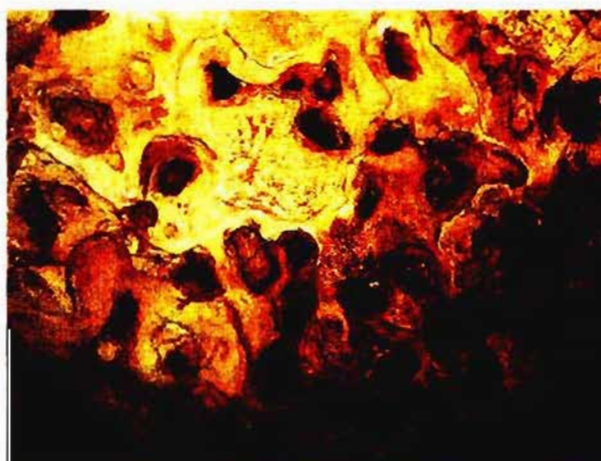


Figure 38c



Figure 39



Figure 40a



Figure 40b



Figure 41a

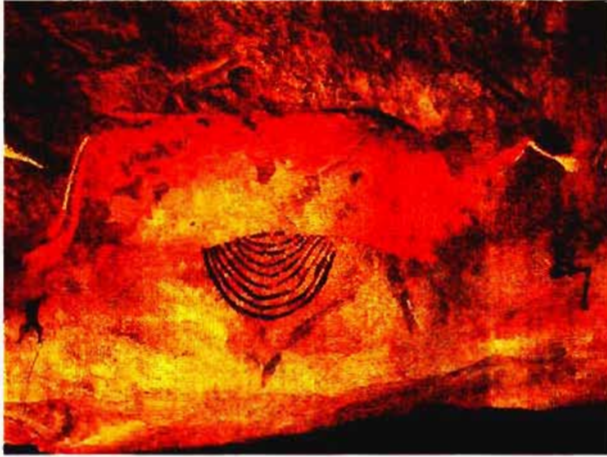


Figure 41b



Figure 41c



Figure 41d



Figure 41e

Appendix One

Two-thirds of South Africa is covered in sedimentary rock, of which the sandstone's of the Cape and Karoo series in the Drakensberg and Lesotho Mountains have weathered to form shelters suitable for habitation, and the San found suitable for painting on (Batchelor, 1989: 15). Sandstone is the most common surface on which the San artists painted, but these rocks weather more rapidly than any other rock type (Townley-Basset, 2001: 19). Sandstone is formed when unweathered material and the insoluble products of weathering are eroded and deposited mechanically, and then compacted into solid rock along with soluble minerals (Loubser, 1991: 117). This causes structural weak points in the rock. The deposit layers and minerals provide avenues along which water and salts travel through the rock. A vast amount of weathering of the rock surface can therefore be attributed to the movement of water through, and over the sandstone rock, causing an erosive action over the surface of the rock (Loubser, 1991: 121; Batchelor, 1989: 23; Pager, 1971: 48). Natural weathering of the rock also largely occurs as a result of the instability of the rock surface being exposed at the surface of the lithosphere (Batchelor, 1989: 16). As the paintings occur on surfaces that have been formed at the most active point of erosion in the rock formation, they are themselves subject to the same forces of weathering such as rain, wind, fire and dust (Townley-Basset, 2001: 5).

The structure and deterioration process that is inherent in the sandstone base rock contributes largely to the deterioration of the paintings. But, the weathering of the actual paintings is also influenced by the pigment composition of the paint used by the San artist, and the pigment durability (Batchelor, 1989: 18). The degree of adhesion of the pigment is related to the porosity and the mineral composition of the base rock, the size and density of the pigment particles, and the nature of the binder used. Batchelor (1989) explains that the finer the pigment particles, the more uniformly it will bind as it penetrates into the rock surface, and hence ensure preservation. For example, black pigment is usually manganese-based in one of its oxidation states, and whites are based on clay or calcium-sulphate and – carbonate. As the white pigment particles are larger than the black, and also less dense, they do not mix well with the binder. When used mixed as a binder with the paint, the white particles are not absorbed deeply into the rock. They remain rather on the surface of the rock and are less durable (Batchelor, 1989: 19; Loubser, 1991: 122). This is why it is more common to see black paintings than white.