Apollo 11 Stones

Namibia. c. 25,500-25,300 B.C.E. Charcoal on stone.

Sources: http://www.mchsapah.com/ancient-mediterranean.html

https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-africa/southern-africa/namibia/a/apollo-11-stones-2

http://arthistorypart1.blogspot.com/2008/01/prehistoric-rock-art-in-africa-apollo.html

Form: Over time the art became buried on the floor of the cave by layers of sediment and debris. Quartzite is a very compact granular rock, which allowed it to stay preserved over time. Also it allowed an easier medium for the nomadic people to create their art.

Context: The stones are the oldest examples of art from a real life object. They were found in the Apollo 11 cave, which was named after the Apollo 11 Spaceship. This was in the Desert Mountains of the Hun in southwestern Namibia, and come from the African continent.

Function: The purpose of these stones is thought to be sympathetic magic, which is a way for the nomadic people to have control the animals.

Content: This animal figure is probably a bovid, which is a mammal of the cattle family. It is thought to be a real animal that the artist could have seen.

Form: This work was done with charcoal by finger painting on flat stones called slabs made out of quartzite.

Function: The nomadic people could use this as a teaching tool to show younger generations how to hunt. It would give them an image of the animal.

Context: German Archaeologist Wolfgang Wendt found the fragment on the left in 1969. More than three years later the piece on the right was excavated.

Form: This is the earliest prehistoric art in Africa. The pigments used might have been prepared for use in body painting or face painting, rather than rock art.

Content: Basic calf muscles with a natural looking curve in the back between the back legs is seen. The front of the animal is bigger than the back. It is not very naturalistic in the head, because the nose and head look like a single unit.

Function: This piece was used as a "picture definition" of the animal. It provided a concise way to identify them.