

Film Review: Beguiling, Hypnotic ‘Cave of Forgotten Dreams’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on April 29, 2011 - 3:30pm

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CHICAGO – Where are the vital connections between our ancient ancestors and our creative, technological selves? Prehistoric cave drawings, the oldest ever discovered, are showcased in Werner Herzog’s new documentary, “Cave of Forgotten Dreams.” The link between who they are and who are we becomes the theme of this remarkable exposition.



Herzog, one of the most provocative and unusual living film artists, fashions a narrative zen state in this document, as his cameras lovingly express and pan across the primitive art. The narration is spare, and when enhanced by talking heads only strives to provide the basic information to appreciate the images on there own, and then is shown again and again.

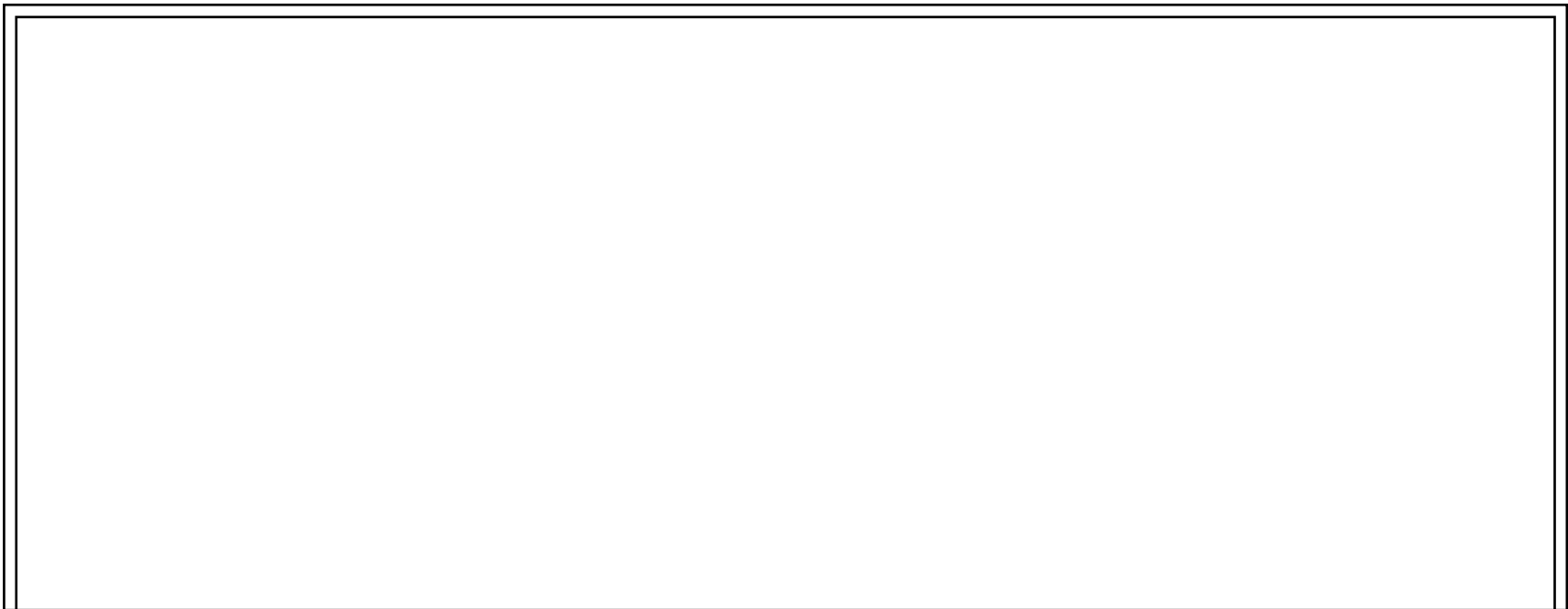
For over 20,000 years, Chauvet Caves in Southern France had been sealed by a fallen rock face, its football field size interior preserved and untouched. In 1994, a team of scientists, led by Jean-Marie Chauvet, found the cave by measuring for hidden wind gusts from the rocks. When the team opened a narrow passage they discovered the miracle of the main room, filled with artwork that had remained unchanged since the so-called Aurignacian era (30,000-32.000 years ago).

Hundreds of animal paintings were catalogued from this find, depicting at least 13 different species. as well as hand prints and foot prints that could be the earliest human proof that can be dated accurately. Fossils of various species are also found, some imbued with a crystallization from years of water drippings that create a even more magical sense of presence.

Cave of Forgotten Dreams is a history, a meditation and a treatise on the nature of art. It is also a direct thought-piece on who we are and what it means to communicate through the ages with our ancient and similarly motivated selves. Often art is simply the broadcasting of our own mysteries and fears, drawn on a cave wall.

“Cave of Forgotten Dreams” opens in a limited release in Chicago and elsewhere on April 29th. Check local listings for theaters, 3D presentations and show times. Written, directed and narrated by Werner Herzog, featuring interviews with Dominique Baffler, Jean Clottes, Jean-Michel Geneste and Carole Fritz. Rated “G”

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On the Inside: Werner Herzog Leads His Crew Into the 'Cave of Forgotten Dreams'
Photo credit: Marc Valesella for IFC Films



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