

WILDFLOWERS OF THE NORTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER VALLEY: Making Natural Pigments for Painting using Rock Minerals

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BACKGROUND



(Courtesy Jean Clottes, Chauvet Cave Project)
Lions, Chauvet Cave, France
Approximately 30,000 – 35,000 years old

Before modern mass-produced consumer paints became available, painters used to make their own paints using natural pigments. The purpose of this research is to investigate how natural pigments were sourced and used to produce paints, with the goal of approaching painting in a more natural, historical, and environmentally friendly form.

METHODS

- Investigate what types of pigments have traditionally been used for painting
- Determine how these pigments were processed into paints
- Source raw materials to use in the creation of paints
- Reproduce the procedure of extracting pigments from the raw materials and processing them into paints
- Use the paints to create an artistic work

RESULTS



- Finished paint pans ready for use

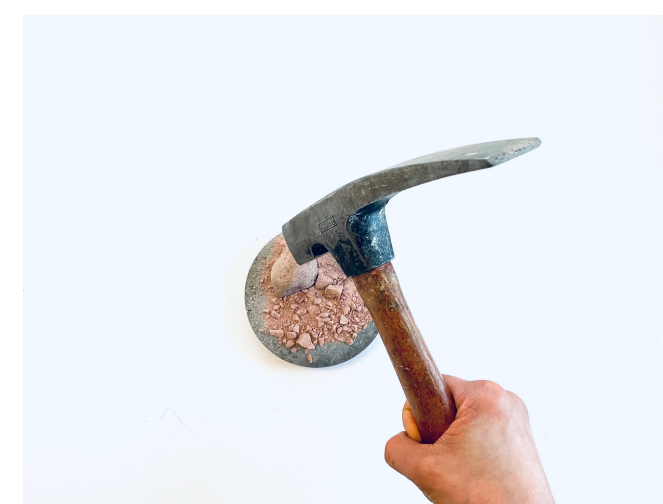


- Paints applied to canvas

PROCESS



1. Gathering a variety of rocks from the North Saskatchewan River valley



2. Breaking the rocks into fragments using a hammer



3. Grinding the rock fragments into powder using a mortar and pestle



4. Mixing the natural ingredients to make the binder



5. Blending the pigments into the binder using a glass muller



6. Transferring the paints to pans to dry

CONCLUSIONS

- Making paints using locally sourced rock minerals proved successful
- The variety of local rock mineral pigments can be limited
- Increasing the search radius for rock minerals could provide greater color variety, i.e., other regions of Alberta or other provinces