



Creatures of Culture

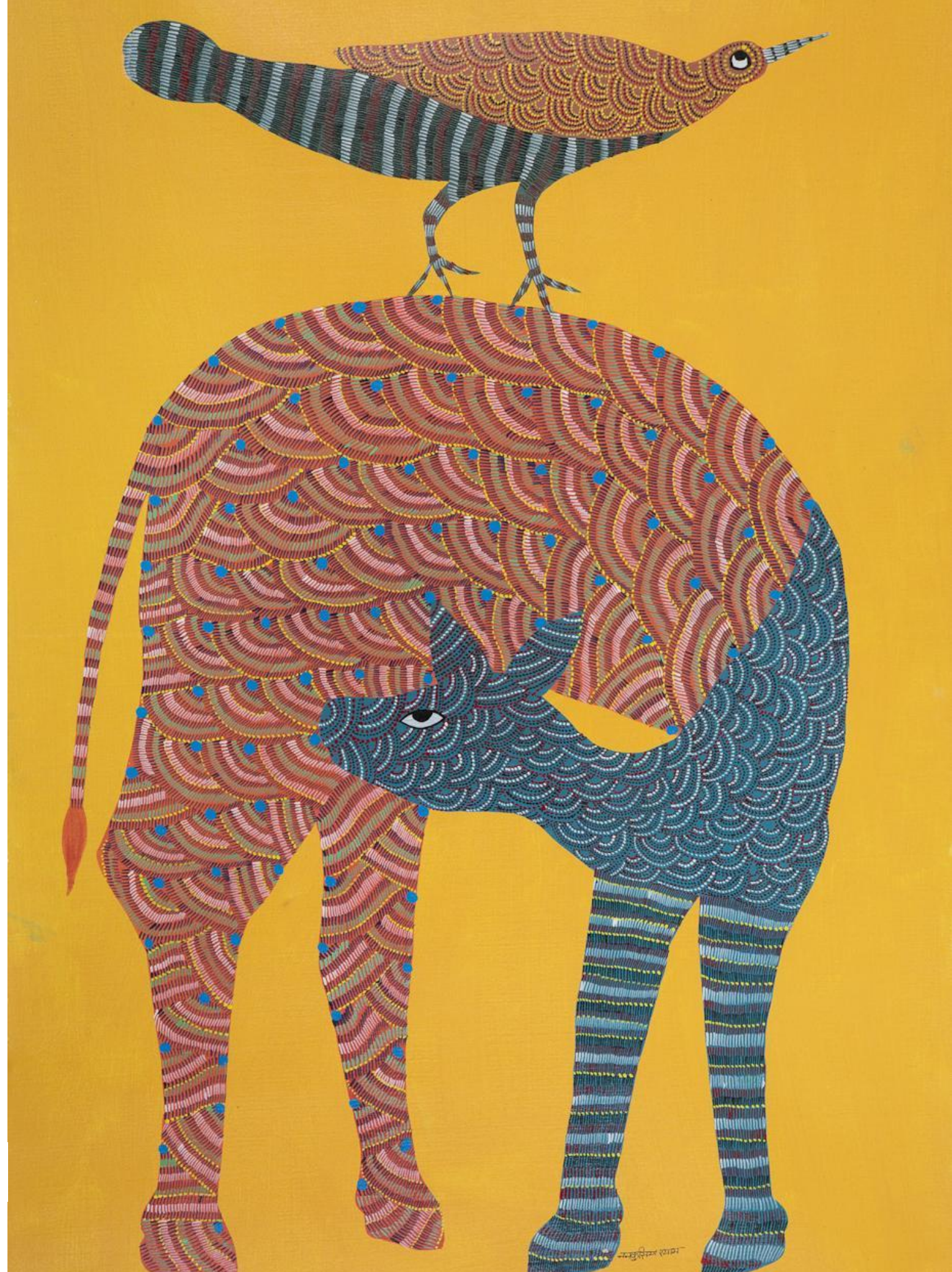
The Animal World in Art

MAP DISCOVER

Throughout human history, animals have been part of our myths and legends, subjects of our artworks and continue to feature in our popular imagination today as movie stars or internet sensations.

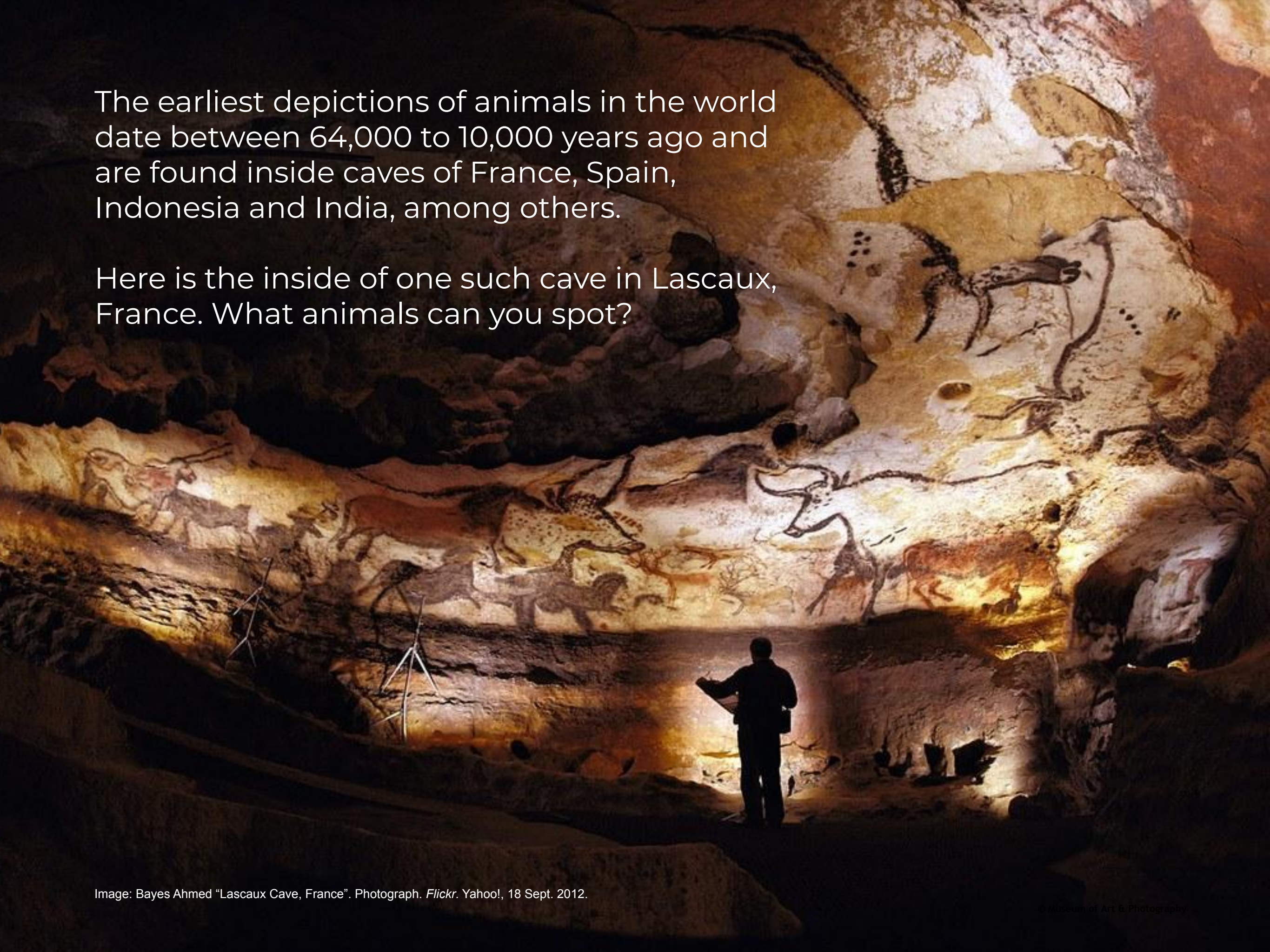
Today we explore the animal world as seen in art through some works from the MAP collections.

If you had to give this painting a title, what would you call it, and why?



The earliest depictions of animals in the world date between 64,000 to 10,000 years ago and are found inside caves of France, Spain, Indonesia and India, among others.

Here is the inside of one such cave in Lascaux, France. What animals can you spot?



Here are some more paintings found in caves around the world.

- What animals do you spot?
- Can you guess the materials used to make these?
- Why do you think humans made animal paintings on caves across the globe?



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LEARN MORE.

The oldest known cave paintings in India are found in a place called Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh. It is a World Heritage site today. [Start here to find out more about these caves.](#)

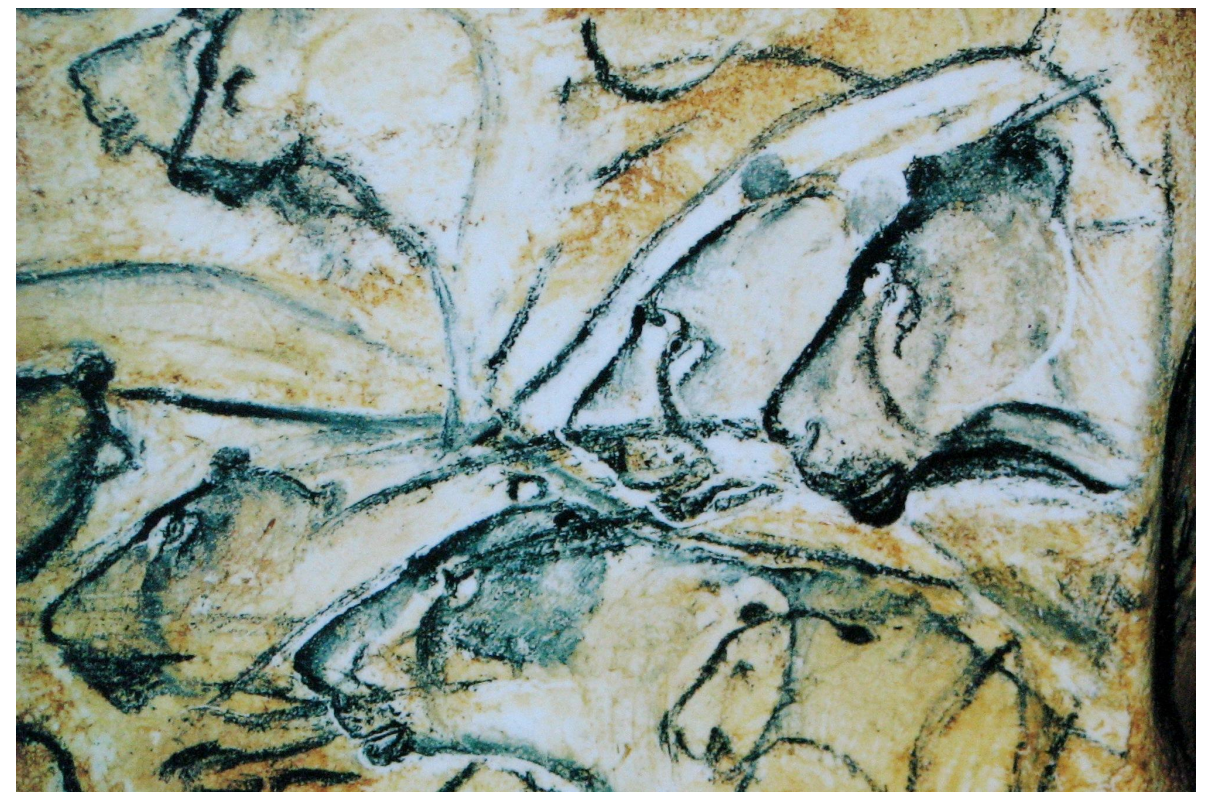


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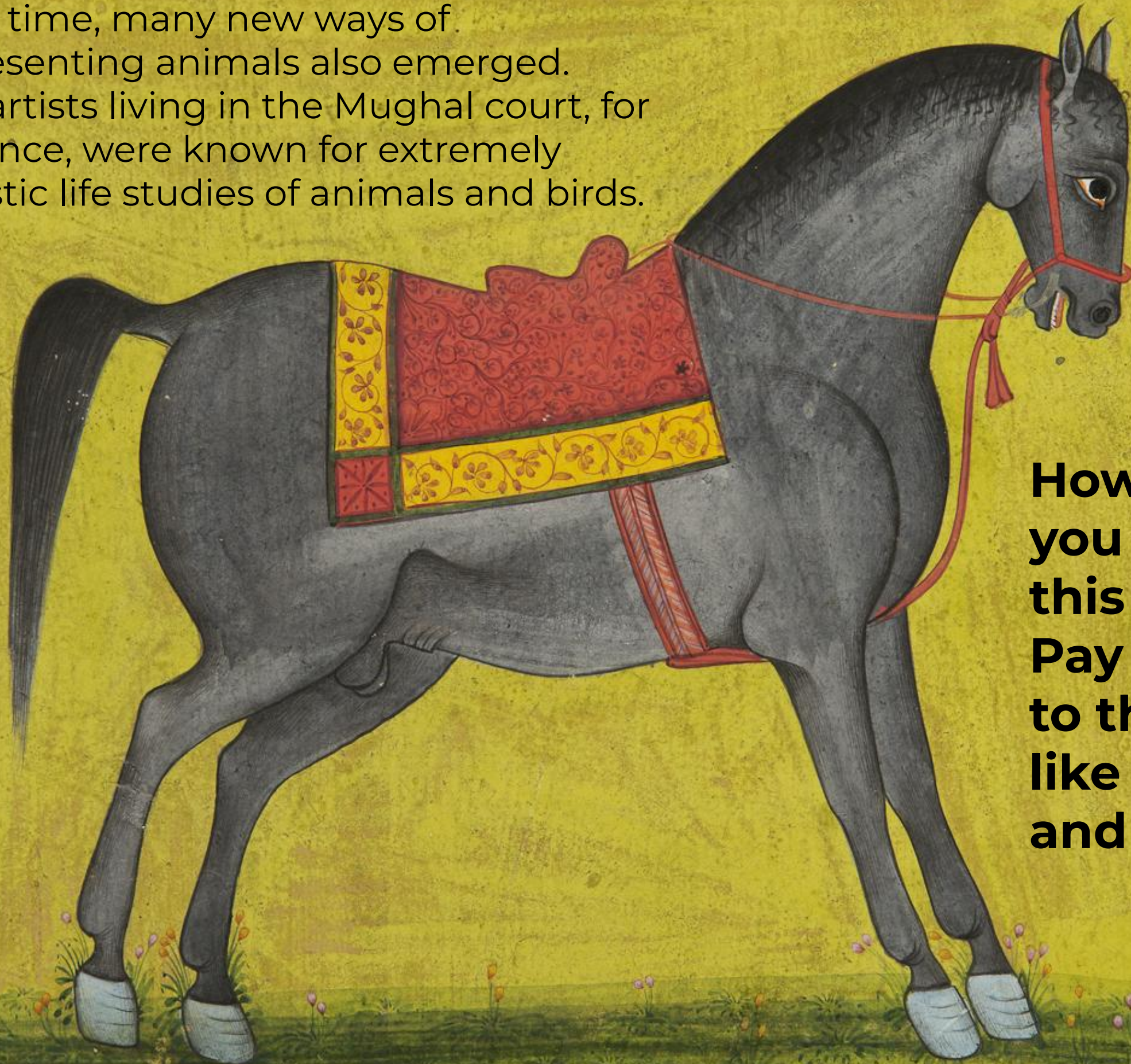


As time progressed, representation of animals moved from cave walls to stone, cloth, clay, paper and a variety of other surfaces.

For example, here is a bull made of wood.

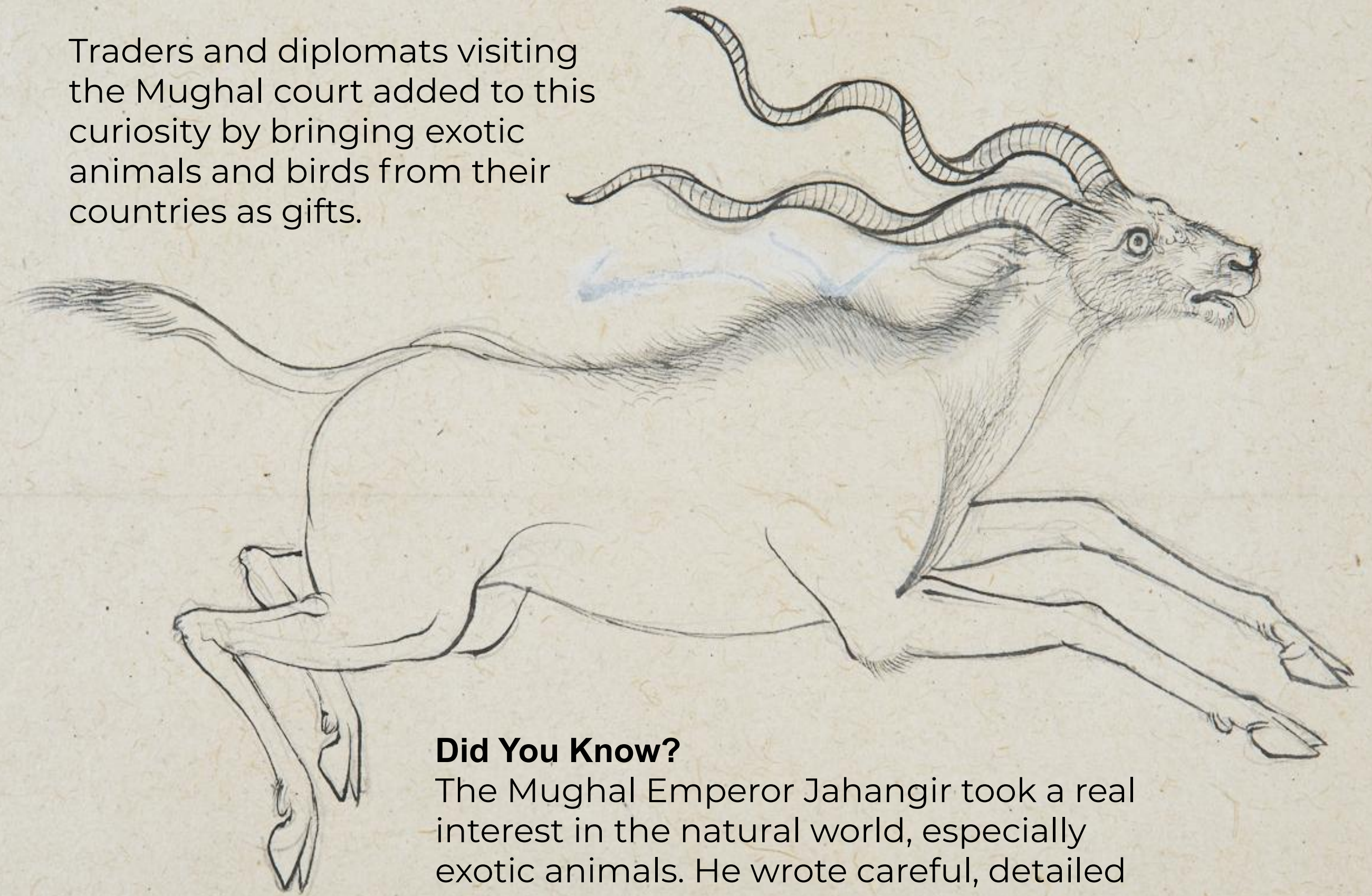
Does this look like any bull you've seen?

With time, many new ways of representing animals also emerged. The artists living in the Mughal court, for instance, were known for extremely realistic life studies of animals and birds.



How would you describe this horse? Pay attention to the details, like its hair and teeth!

Traders and diplomats visiting the Mughal court added to this curiosity by bringing exotic animals and birds from their countries as gifts.



Did You Know?

The Mughal Emperor Jahangir took a real interest in the natural world, especially exotic animals. He wrote careful, detailed descriptions of the new animals he encountered in his journals! He also commissioned many paintings of them!



LOOK CLOSELY.

Do you think think the artist looked at an actual elephant while painting this? Why / Why not?

Is there any way to tell if the artist changed his mind about something while painting?

CREATE.

Try drawing an animal from life.
Watch a video online (or even better, go outdoors) to observe animals in their natural habitat.

- Focus on how their bodies move and specific features of their bodies, like the ears or the legs.
- Watch how they behave in their natural habitat. Also pay attention to the environment itself.

Make quick sketches as you notice things about your chosen animal.

What emotion do you think this monkey is feeling? Is it happy? Sad? Something else?



The animal kingdom is a constant source of curiosity for human beings. So, of course, we use animal designs to decorate our everyday objects.

This silver pot has a running design of fish, as you can see.



Can you think of some reasons why the maker of this pot might have chosen fish, specifically?

Sometimes in decorating everyday items with animals, the form of the animal and that of the object come smoothly together and complement each other.

LOOK CLOSELY.

- What is the use of this object?
- What animal does it look like?
- Can you think of any other animal or bird form that can be used to decorate a kitchen grater?



Perhaps the most interesting use of animals in decorating objects, are ones in which so much thought goes into the decoration that it can be hard to figure what the actual use of the item is! Like this one.

Can you guess what this object is and what it might be used for?

Hint: The answer is hidden in the shape of the item!
What is this animal known for?



This item is a milk jug!

The milk goes in through the opening on the top. You can see the lid for this, near the legs of the cow in this image.

When serving, you simply pour it out of the mouth, by lifting the jug by the tail!

Isn't that super inventive?

CREATE.

Now how about designing your own animal shaped objects?

Download the **MAP Worksheet** to get you started on your own invention journey!



VOCABULARY ALERT!

This process of giving animal features to non-living objects, humans and even gods, is known as **zoomorphism**.

For example, this is the mask of Pilichamundi. He is a godly being who is imagined as a tiger, and worshipped by a community in Karnataka, in the south of India.



Can you spot any other animals in this mask?

Here are some other examples of zoomorphism in visual art. In each case, the object cleverly turns into an animal! Look at them closely and **try filling in the statement below for each of the three images**. Once done, you can check your answers by tilting your screen (or your neck)!

Image: The Metropolitan Museum, New York



Image: Uploaded by henry Middleton, distributed under the Creative Commons license

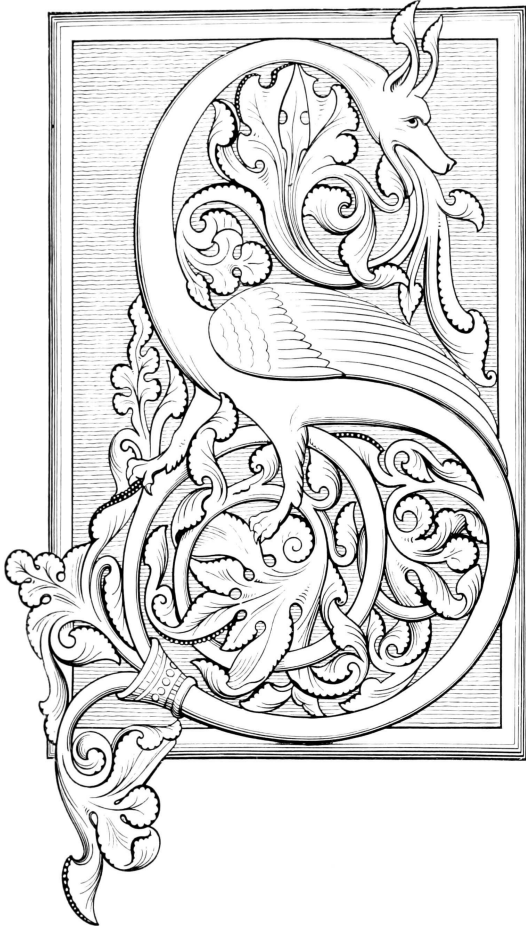


Image: Uploaded by GDJ on needpix.com, distributed under the Creative Commons license



A _____ turning into a _____

WHO'S WHO.

It's time for a quick game. All you need is some paper, a pen or pencil and your imagination. Let's play!

1.

Imagine you woke up one morning and discovered that your city was magically taken over by animals. Which animals do you think would be best suited to the roles on the next page?

2.

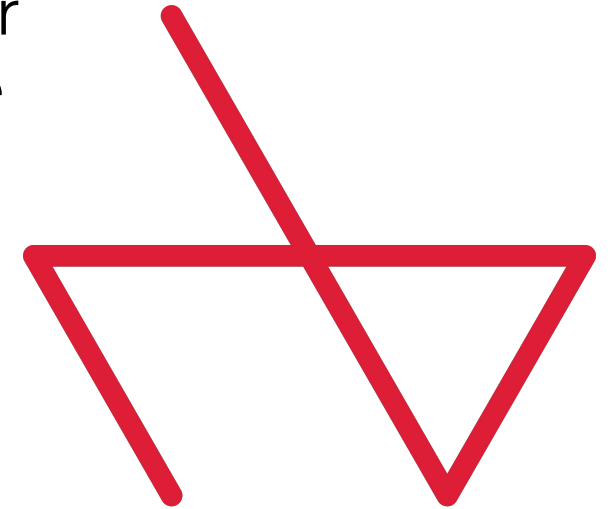
Pair up with a friend or a family member. Get them to also make their own list.

3.

Now, compare your lists. How many of your answers are the same? Talk to each other and find out why you chose those animals. Are your reasons also the same?

4.

Here's the tricky part! You have to come up with a final list that you both agree on. So you have to try convincing each other, in all the cases where you picked different animals as to whose choice would be a better fit!



IMAGINE.

Can you find animal substitutes for these professionals?



An Artist



A Doctor



A Mailman



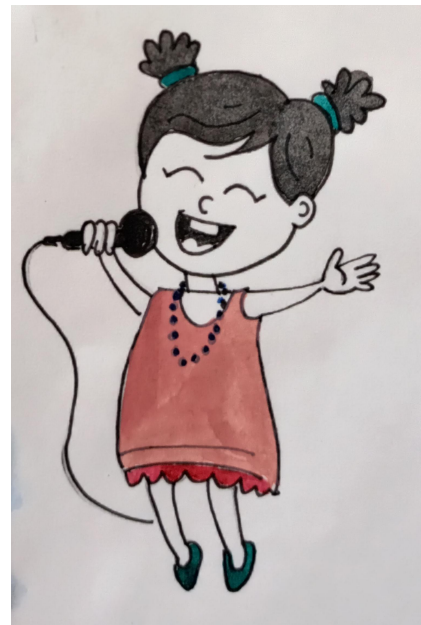
A Pilot



A Woodworker



A Firefighter



A Singer



A Swimmer



What animal did you choose for the swimmer? Why?

What about the pilot?

Just like with the game, our minds are always making connections between certain animals and certain features.

Usually we make these associations based on the animal's physical or behavioural aspects.

For example, you might have heard the phrases 'as strong as an ox', 'as brave as a lion' or as 'cunning as a fox'.



We also associate animals with human features in many of our stories. Sometimes the animals in our stories eat, talk and dress like us.

Look at this image. Is it familiar?
Do you recognise who this is?

Hint: He is a fictional character in a famous story that involves a girl falling down a rabbit hole!



Image: Uploaded by franklino peixoto on WallpaperFlare, distributed under the Creative Commons license

VOCABULARY ALERT!

The process of giving non-human things (including animals, birds and non-living objects) human characteristics is called **anthropomorphism**.

Here are some anthropomorphic figures that you might be familiar with.

Do you know what human traits are associated with each of these characters?

EXPRESS.

Explore our **Stories with Art** extra to create your own cool animal characters, and get them started on their adventures!



Image: Uploaded by ABD Ltd/Ent on npr.org. 2003



Image: Generation Bass "Kung fu Panda". Photograph. Flickr. Yahoo!, 28 Nov. 2007.



Image: Uploaded on pxfuel, distributed under the Creative Commons license

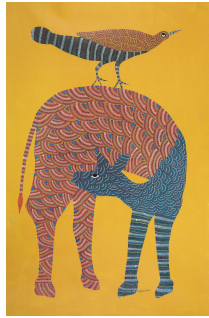
We also use animals as symbols to create emblems and logos.

The idea here is to identify the associated qualities of the animal with those of the brand, product or nation advertised.

This label designed in Britain around a hundred years ago, features portraits of Queen Victoria with a lion. The lion is meant to symbolise British strength, bravery and pride.

Can you copy the lion's pose? How does it make you feel?





Untitled, 2011
Nankushiya Shyam
Acrylic on canvas
H. 120 cm, W. 75 cm
PTG.0858



Textile label of the Finlay Campbell and
Co, Manchester, 1870s
Finlay Campbell and Co, Manchester
Chromolithograph on paper
H. 16 cm, W. 13 cm
POP.00394



Bhuta Sculpture of Nandigona, 1850
Unknown Maker(s)
Natural pigments on wood
H. 89 cm, W. 126 cm, D. 33 cm
SCU.00062



Study of a monkey, 20th century
Unknown Maker(s)
1 tinted brush drawing on paper
H. 31 cm, W. 24 cm
PTG.01023



A tamed elephant with trappings,
Undated
Unknown Maker(s)
Opaque watercolour on paper
H. 11 cm, W. 14.2 cm
PTG.01501



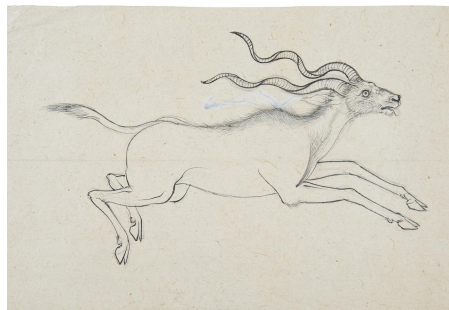
Water container, Late 19th century
Unknown Maker(s)
Silver repousse
H. 9.3 cm, D. 8.5 cm
SCU.00371



Painting of a horse
Unknown Maker(s)
Opaque watercolour on paper
H. 10 cm, W. 15 cm
PTG.01147



Turtle-shaped grater, 20th century
Unknown Maker(s)
Bronze
H. 26 cm, W. 19.5 cm
SCU.00750



Study of a markhor, 19th century
Unknown Maker(s)
Brush drawing on paper
H. 12 cm, W. 16 cm
PTG.01123



Creamer in the shape of a cow, 1936
Harman and Co., London
Silver
H. 10 cm, W. 16 cm
SCU.00352



Mask of Pilichamundi, 19th century
Unknown Maker(s)
Cast Bronze
H. 80 cm, W. 55 cm. D. 22 cm
SCU.00071



MAP

**Museum of Art
& Photography**

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Sua House
26/1 Kasturba Cross Road
Bangalore 560 001, India

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