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SHELTERED PERFORMANCES

Differences and similarities between painted sites on a southern Drakensberg ridge in the Maclear District, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa



WITS
UNIVERSITY

David Mendel Witelson

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Science, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.

Johannesburg, July 2018

DECLARATION

I, David Mendel Witelson, declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Master of Science at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.

David M. Witelson

Signed this 3rd day of July 2018 at the University of the Witwatersrand in Braamfontein, Johannesburg.

ABSTRACT

Southern African San (Bushman) rock art is one of the most well-researched rock arts globally. Some aspects of it, however, remain under-researched and under-theorised. While the study of San rock art is informed by ethnographic sources, they are frustratingly mute about the practice itself. This dissertation addresses that gap by investigating the processes that resulted in a pattern of simultaneous differences and similarities at painted sites on the MEL ridge. It acknowledges that rock painting and other forms of San expressive culture—which, in contrast to rock painting, were ethnographically observed and historically documented—are of a kind. It draws on performance studies literature, San rock art research, San ethnography, and the painted places along the MEL ridge to show that the production and consumption of San rock paintings were performative. By understanding the practice of San rock painting in terms of performance we can understand better the practice itself.

For my father and my mother

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Completing this dissertation was a task made more enjoyable by the help that I received along the way. It is difficult to remember all the kindnesses that have been shown to me and I hope that I do not forget too many names. I am grateful to Mark McGranaghan for discussions on performance at early stages of this dissertation and for answering some questions about |Xam words for ‘strength’. Before the research began, Geoff Blundell and Sam Challis sat on my proposal committee and provided thoughtful commentary and constructive criticism that allowed the project to develop into a dissertation. My sincere thanks to Ryan Sephton for hosting me during field trips at the Woodcliffe Country House, and to Craig Sephton for permission to work on the MR. Anton Olivier kindly issued me with a permit to access the MR from forestry land. Paul den Hoed commented on drafts of the theoretical chapter, allowing me to express some of the concepts more clearly. Jeremy Hollmann told me how to photograph the rock paintings on the MR for the best results and kindly shared with me his procedures for digitally enhancing images and also provided feedback on some of my early attempts. Eric Wettengel also gave me some photography and enhancement tips. Dominic Stratford shared his time generously to educate me on the weathering processes behind the formation of the MEL ridge itself and the depressions found in the rock face at some of the sites. Connor Boyd assisted with the survey of the valleys around the MR, discovered MEL14, and taught me a thing or two about image manipulation software. Kiah Johnson helped me to measure each of the sites and, together with Larissa Snow and the Pearce Family, I am grateful for experiences shared on that trip. David Lewis-Williams was always on stand-by to discuss ideas, look at photographs, comment on drafts of chapters, and keep me on track in the face of a thousand tangential interesting topics that were crying out for attention.

I owe my supervisor, David Pearce, a great debt of gratitude. He remained at all times calm and collected despite my choice to embrace a theoretical framework with which neither of us was familiar at the start. He has guided this dissertation over the past two years, supported the intellectual thrust of the project, funded additional field trips, commented on each chapter as I completed it, and generally prevented me from running overtime. I hope that he enjoyed the show as much as I did.

I extend my thanks to the two anonymous examiners who read my work so thoroughly and provided me with insightful feedback and some constructive criticism.

A final word of thanks goes to my friends and family who remained interested in and enthusiastic about my work. To Tracy, Roy and Keith, I am especially grateful for your unwavering support. To Iris, I could not have done it without you.

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A NOTE ON CONVENTIONS USED IN THE TEXT

The notebooks compiled by Wilhelm H.I. Bleek and Lucy C. Lloyd in the late nineteenth-century total some 12 000 manuscript pages of handwritten |Xam phonetic script with verbatim transcripts in English. They are available online at http://lloydbleekcollection.cs.uct.ac.za/. References to pages in the notebooks take the following form: L.VIII.16: 7431. The first letter denotes either Wilhelm Bleek (B) or Lucy Lloyd (L), the Roman numerals denote the informant's numerical assignation, the first Arabic number the number of the notebook and the second Arabic number the page number(s).

INTRODUCTION

Some current questions in San[1] rock art research will never be fully answered until we understand better the practice of San rock painting itself. How, for instance, do we begin to study the layer upon layer of imagery at some sites for which, more often than not, we do not have chronological contexts? Is it enough to treat each image simply as the result of a separate image-making event, as with the deposition of a layer in an excavated sequence, or must we realize that each image is potentially tied in multiple, socially-significant ways to other images both on the same rock surface and at other painted sites? Similarly, how can we begin to investigate the relationships between painted sites when, currently, stylistic approaches to San rock paintings do not allow for high-resolution, small-scale comparisons (cf. Flett & Letley 2013, see also Hampson *et al.* 2002; Hampson 2015)? A further question is *why* do we not have that kind of resolution when in some areas of the world unambiguous stylistic sequences are not particularly difficult to discern?

It is important to acknowledge from the start that Western art is not equivalent to San image-making (e.g., Lewis-Williams 1974: 102, 1984, 1988: 2). The current method for the study of San imagery in painted sites is, therefore, well-adapted to the nature of how the art is made. The processes behind San image-making, such as which kinds of images are painted, where they are painted on the rock face, and what sorts of other images or features of the rock face they interact with, are all important considerations for the way that rock art is studied. Despite this, however, there is little other information that informs the researcher of San rock paintings about the practice of image-making itself. We are left asking, if we dare ask at all, questions to which the documentary sources are, in any direct sense,

[1] It is well-known that the term 'San' is one with pejorative connotations, as is the synonym 'Bushman'. 'San' is, however, generally the preferred term in South Africa and my use of the word rejects all pejorative connotations. It is common practice, but not unproblematic, to refer to the traditional corpus of fine-line hunter-gatherer rock art as San rock art because of ethnohistorical ties between that corpus of imagery and groups of San people.

mute in reply.

This dissertation engages with some of these broader concerns by focusing on a small suite of painted sites clustered together on one side of a ridge. This scale, one at which several close sites are considered together, is one not usually investigated in the study of San rock painting sites and allows for some not uncommon relationships to be investigated in an unconventional way. When the meanings of San images are investigated, rather than the investigation of chronological, distributional, technical, chemical or stylistic topics, they are usually formulated in relation to ethnographically-informed themes. This dissertation attempts to acknowledge that while the meaning and social significance of images are indeed highly important, they are important not only because of the images' conceptual associations, but because of the ways that the significances are enacted.

This approach has led to an attempt to examine in detail a large number of images in a single body of work. As the work progressed, I found that image-by-image examination and analysis, rather than only as they appear in groups—regardless of the images' state of preservation—produced more information that, by taking variety into account, led to richer and more nuanced understandings. With so many images before them, researchers are inclined to gloss over differences in favour of generalisations. Nonetheless, each image deserves the same degree of attention that the image-makers themselves accorded them.

To facilitate the flow of the theoretical and interpretative discussions contained herein, I have grouped empirical descriptions and diagrams of all the sites, their dimensions and contexts, as well as numerical surveys, in Appendices A–D.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1: A painted ridge

On a farm in the Maclear District, on the southern slopes of the uKhahlamba-Drakensberg escarpment, there is a rock shelter in which a remarkable rock painting survives (Figures 1.1, C.6). It is in some ways similar to, in others different from, paintings at seven additional painted sites along the same ridge. At the centre of the painted scene is a large male human figure with red lines on its face. To its left and right are seated clapping figures. Bags, digging sticks, and other equipment surround them. Much of the research on which I later draw has shown that paintings like this depict moments or synopses of communal trance dance performances—a practice no longer found in the south-eastern mountains of South Africa but extant among the Kalahari San where it was experienced first-hand by 20th- and 21st-century ethnographers (e.g., Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2012a). Figure 1.1 shows different groups—some human, some not—interacting in important and socially significant ways (see Chapter 3). Although no one has made rock paintings in the south-eastern mountains since the beginning of the twentieth century (How 1962; Prins 1994), San images and ethnohistorical records (Arbousset & Daumas 1846; Orpen 1874; Stanford 1910) hint at the possibility that rock painting was, like folktales or the performance of the trance dance, a form of San expressive culture (Guenther 1994: 265).

Figure 1.1, like most of the images I discuss in this dissertation, lies on the MEL ridge (hereafter simply the MR), roughly 25 km south of the border between South Africa and Lesotho, in the Maclear District of the Eastern Cape Province (Figure 1.2). The MR hosts a suite of eight sites (Figure 1.3 and Appendix C). From the southern end to the northern end, or left to right if facing west, the order of the sites is MEL7, MEL6, MEL5, MEL4, MEL12, MEL3, MEL2 and MEL1.



Figure 1.1. A redrawing of the trance dance scene at MEL6. Note the three large figures on the left and one on the right with claws and/or tusks. After Blundell 2004: fig. 37. Original tracing and redrawing by T.A. Dowson.

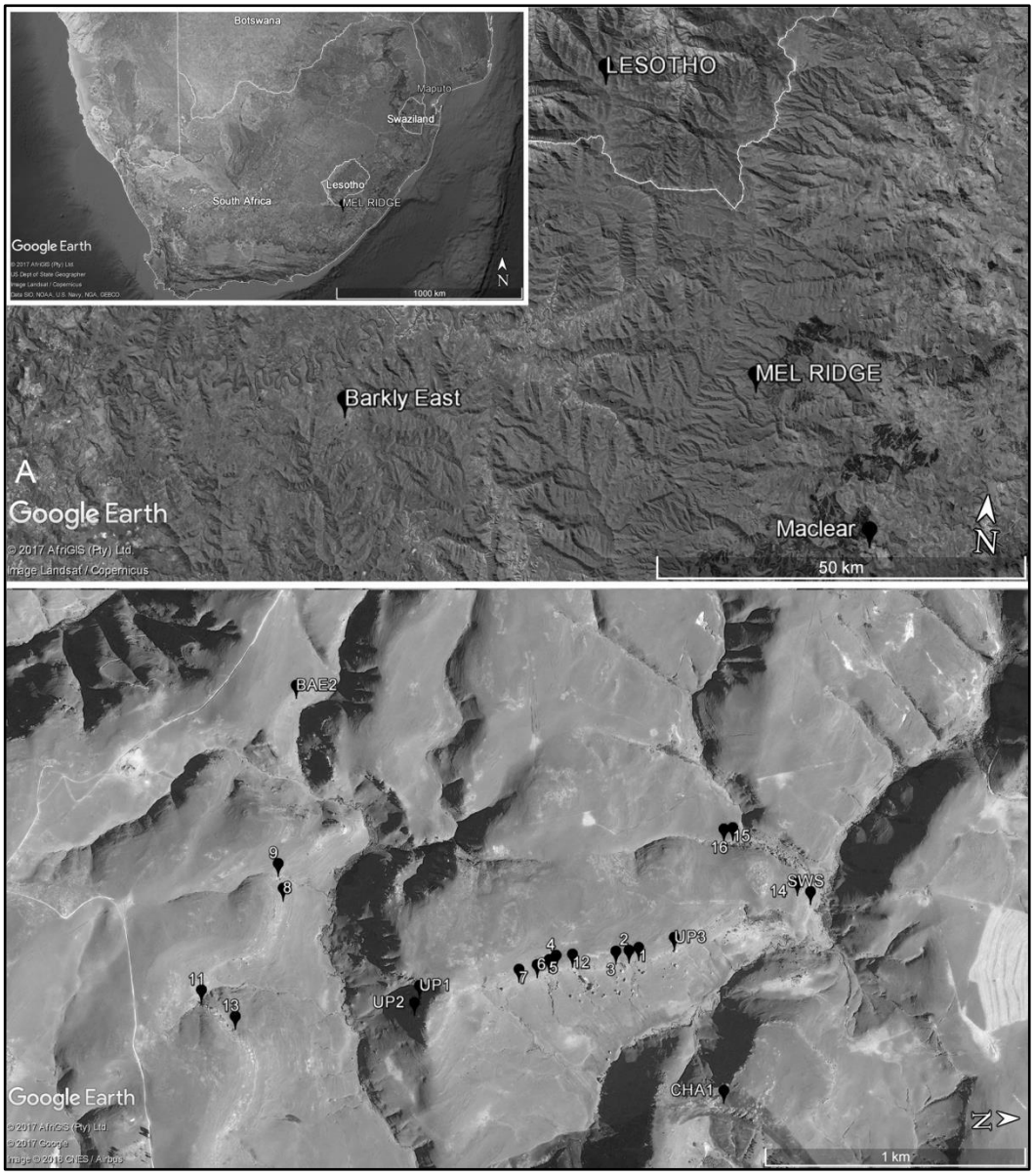


Figure 1.2. Sites on the MR and nearby. (A) Google Earth Image showing the location of the MR. (B) Google Earth Image showing the MR sites at the centre of the image and other sites nearby. UP=unpainted rock shelter. SWS=stone-walled structure

The cryptic format of the site names follows the convention of the Rock Art Research Institute (RARI) at the University of the Witwatersrand, which is designed, in part, to protect sites from destruction because site locations are not shared indiscriminately. Site names are attributed numerically in the order in

which sites are found and thus do not reflect the true proximity of sites to each other.

When walking, from the southern end, and thus encountering the sites from left to right in Figure 1.3, it is striking that, at least in general, none of the painted sites along the ridge is quite the same as any of the others. While each shelter appears to have its own 'character' or 'trajectory'[2], the paintings on the ridge as a whole are nevertheless part of one distinct painting tradition. The imagery is almost entirely composed of the fine-line, traditional corpus and is devoid of (1) colonial-period subject matter (such as guns, Western clothing, wagons, etc.) (e.g., Willcox 1956: Plates 45–47; Lee & Woodhouse 1970: 149–160; Vinnicombe 1976: 8–103); (2) 'Late White' finger-painted images associated with Northern Sotho groups (e.g., Eastwood 2003: 21; Smith & van Schalkwyk 2002); and (3) any images that could be associated with the 'Khoekhoen tradition' (e.g., Smith & Ouzman 2004; Eastwood & Smith 2005). The only noteworthy subject matter on the MR that, because it is visually distinct, falls outside of the pre-contact hunter-gatherer context are two therianthropes at MEL6 with horns or heads indicative of cattle (Figure 1.4A, Figure 1.4Y)[3]. It is thus apparent that most of the subject matter of the MR images reflects, in a broad sense, content related to the painting tradition of hunting and gathering San people.

Some of the painted sites are indeed habitable rock shelters that provide protection from the elements and have a flat floor, but most offer minimal shelter or none at all (Appendices A–C). At MEL2, for example, the images have been placed in a small recessed part of the rock face that is otherwise flat and above the ground surface (Figure C.2). Nevertheless, the images in each site are in some way different from, and yet similar to, the others. Trends and idiosyncrasies in particular kinds of imagery become, in general, apparent across the ridge (Appendix D). Similarities and differences are, therefore, central themes of this

[2] The 'trajectory' in painted imagery is subtle at some sites but is noticeable at the nearby site of MEL8 where there is a remarkable numerical emphasis on figures with oversized phalluses (George 2011: 1).
[3] It is, however, not clear from the images themselves whether the cattle motifs derive from early or late 'contact' between hunter-gatherers and people with cattle.

dissertation. A purely quantitative investigation of these themes is, however, problematic: we do not know which measurements to make or how to justify the significance of patterns that emerge from those measurements.

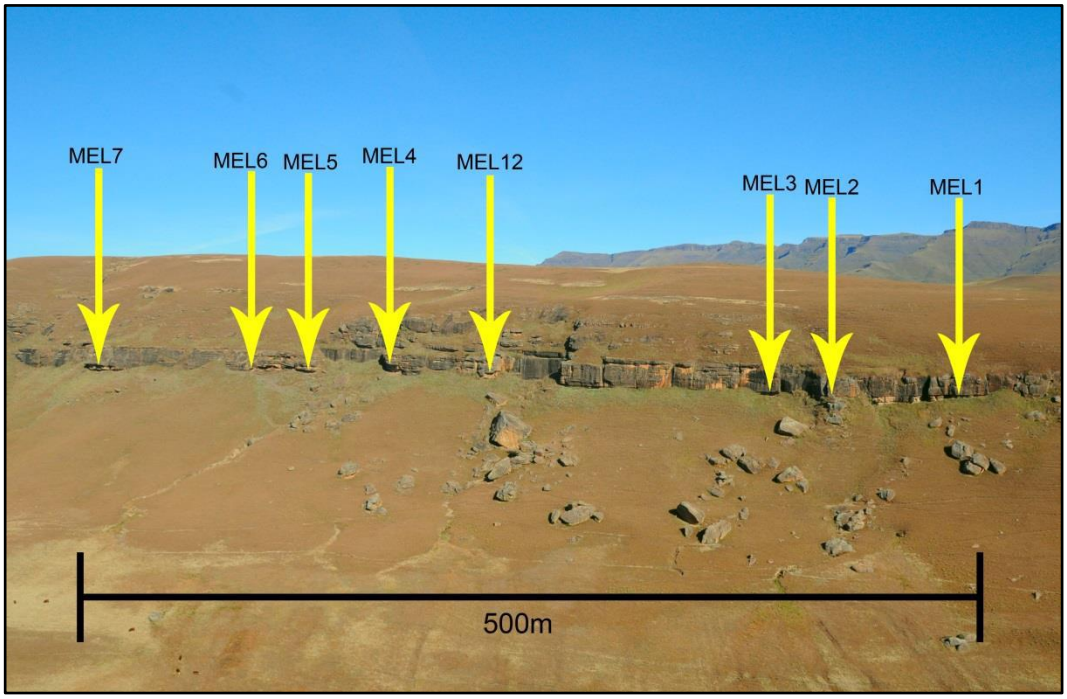


Figure 1.3. The locations of the eight MR sites. The arrows point to the overhang of each respective site. Image faces west. Photograph by the author.

Our categories—stylistic, typological, numerical or otherwise—remain etic because they result from the analytical constructs of the researcher, as opposed to emic categories which describe the terms or concepts that human actors use for their own objects or behaviours (Harris 1968: 568–571; Hayden 1984: 80). Extensive and time-consuming quantitative studies were carried out in the 1960s and 1970s (Maggs 1967; Pager 1971; Lewis-Williams 1972, 1974, 1981a; Vinnicombe 1976). While that research did allow for patterns in the subject matter to be confirmed in numerical terms, it did not explain *why* those patterns existed. Research has shown that focused polysemy is a feature of San images: two otherwise apparently similar motifs may, in the contexts in which they are

painted, have different meanings (Lewis-Williams 1998). Without some way of informing the criteria selected for comparisons, the range of differences and similarities is unconstrained. A highly detailed, descriptive and exegetical approach is, therefore, more suitable than one which focuses only on assumed typological categories. The remainder of this dissertation is an attempt at an approach which seeks to understand differences and similarities in painted San images *from an emic, San perspective,* while bearing in mind that, though San images are not akin to Western art, they nevertheless occupied a particular position within San worldview.

1.2: The problem with 'sites'

A central concern of this dissertation is the kind of performances involved in the production and consumption of painted San imagery as discussed by David Lewis-Williams (1994, 1995, 2001a). How paintings were made and viewed, as well as used, raises the issue of how we define painted 'sites' because, although rock art imagery is implicated in a network of resources and social relations that inform how the makers and viewers of images conceptualised painted sites and places (e.g., Lewis-Williams 1994, 2010; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2004a), we have little idea of *how* to go about comparing different painted sites. Indeed, by which significant criteria should such a comparison be made? It is, therefore, crucial that we understand the nature of the places at which image-making performances took place and to note that the 'archaeological site' is, not a given, but rather an etic categorisation of the places at which researchers find images.

The eight MR sites are, however, a real and not an arbitrary, imposed grouping because the sites are concentrated in a stretch just over half a kilometre long. Only one overhang has been left unpainted at the northern end of the MR beyond MEL1 shortly before the ridge peters out (Figure 1.2B). What binds the spatially-close painted sites together, and perhaps eliminates something of a division between them, is that image-makers repeatedly chose the same places for the making of images. In any case, a person or group in the valley below, whether moving parallel to the ridge or perpendicular to it, encounters the MR with its

several painted places.

I have, so far, referred to painted places as ‘painted sites’ as well as ‘painted shelters’, both individually and as a suite because of the etic and emic ways in which it is possible to classify differences between painted shelters. Tilman Lenssen-Erz (2012), for example, presents a typology of rock art sites that aims to consider all the contextualising factors of which researchers may think. Typologies of sites stem from a notion of the rock art site as a place where the researcher finds images based on a presence/absence relationship. If there are no paintings in a shelter, then the researcher must conclude that the barren shelter is not a site. In some ways, typological approaches to the categorisation of painted sites confront the reality that people chose to make images in particular places. The fundamental location for specific MR image-making performances must necessarily be the rock faces onto which those images were made (e.g., Lewis-Williams 1994: 282); it cannot be where the images are not, although we must allow that people may have had beliefs about, and performed rituals in, unpainted localities.

For the MR, it is visible upon inspection that the eight closely spaced sites share both differences and similarities in painted content. As there is currently no reliable or conventional way of expressing this in stylistic terms, I do so numerically by grouping together what I deem basic motifs (Appendix D). I have already discussed the problems with such etic approaches, and have noted that adopting a detailed, descriptive and exegetical ethnographically-informed approach to the study of painted sites is more desirable. An implication of this is that a description of the MR sites as a total of eight is potentially misleading because the distance between panels within each site and between each painted site is not always the same and, in at least one case, there are paintings outside of and adjacent to the actual shelter (to the left and outside of MEL1). It is thus possible that the entire ridge was, at least for the people who made images there, one multi-component place where images could be painted rather than a collection of eight separate places (Chapter 6).

At least two concepts derived from both San ethnography and rock art are

evidence for an emic concept of rock art sites. The first is an association between ritual potency and place. A |Xam man, |Han≠kass'o (also known as Klein Jantje), expressed an association between 'strength' (*!giya*) and place when he said that "[a] snake which is powerful (strong), it is the one which we, because we saw it at *a place which is strong*, it is the one (of) which we put in one poison fang" (L.VIII.26: 8330, emphasis added). Janette Deacon made a similar point in her discussion of the relationship between landscape features and engraved rain-making images that occur in an area of today's Northern Cape Province in South Africa that once comprised the territories of the |Xam San: "[e]ngravings at these places reinforced the power *already present there* because the animals and other themes depicted carried metaphorical significance that inspired the rainmakers and their assistants" (Deacon 1988: 136–137, emphasis added).

The second concept concerns territory (*n!oresi* in Ju'|hoan) which is shared based on ties to specific people and thus to valuable resources; where one band or camp has access to, for example, abundant water, another group in an area with little water is granted access simply by asking for permission (Marshall 1976; Marshall Thomas 2006). Additional features that indicate an emic notion behind places where images could be made are explored in Chapter 5.

In sum, while 'site' is a readily available concept and term to describe the painted shelters on the MR, an emic notion allows for a better understanding of how the image-makers who once lived in what is today the Maclear District would have conceptualised the suite of sites on the ridge.

1.3: Maclear: its people and rock art

The Maclear District lies within an area once known as 'Nomansland'. "In the last 150 years, it has been labelled, either in its totality or in its various parts, East Griqualand, Transkei, North Eastern Cape and today north Eastern Cape" (Blundell 2004: 34). It is necessary to bear in mind that the Maclear District was previously part of an area with a liminal, ambiguous status: colonial-era politics treated it as a veritable no-man's-land despite the presence of San and many other groups in the region (Blundell 2004: 34–40). Ethnohistorical documents from the

Nomansland region are unprecedented in the connections that they enable us to draw between specific people, places and rock art over "some 130 years" (Blundell 2004: 34–45; Smith 2010).

Archaeological evidence indicates that hunter-gatherers had occupied the region around the Maclear District as early as 29 000 years ago (Opperman 1992, 1996) with punctuated occupations through into the colonial period (Opperman 1987, 1999; Opperman & Heydenrych 1990). Rock paintings from the Maclear District that have recently been directly dated provide evidence for the practice of rock painting having been present in the region for at least 3 000 years (Bonneau, Pearce *et al*. 2017: 331).

Painted sites in the Maclear District have been known since the first decade of the 20th century. Two painted panels were removed—the Zamenkomst panel in 1912 and the Linton panel in 1918—and put on display at the South African Museum (now Iziko Museums) in Cape Town (Davison 2012). During the 1940s and 1950s, South African artist Walter Battiss visited and copied images at painted sites in Maclear (Mallen 2005: 3). He also visited sites in the broader area and published a book that included descriptions and plates of painted sites in Lady Grey and Barkly East (Battiss 1948). Battiss was later followed by Neil Lee and Bert Woodhouse who published photographs of images from, among others, the Maclear sites of CHA1 (see Figure 1.2B), TYN2, WID1, HIL1, PRH1 and FEN3 (Lee & Woodhouse 1970: 10–11).

Scholarly research in Maclear by what is today the Rock Art Research Institute (RARI) began several decades prior to the first theses and published research on Maclear District rock paintings. Much of the published or postgraduate research is thematically or theoretically orientated (e.g., Dowson 1994; Pearce 2002, 2010a, 2010b; Blundell 2004; Mallen 2004, 2005, 2008; Turner 2006; Henry 2010; Bonneau *et al*. 2011; George 2011, 2013; Pearce & George 2011; Bonneau *et al.* 2012; Bonneau *et al*. 2014; Bonneau 2016; Bonneau, Pearce *et al*. 2017; Bonneau, Staff *et al*. 2017).

Some studies are concerned with specific kinds of images, while others

investigate different themes, sequences of images or issues of conservation and preservation (Pearce 2002, 2010a, 2010b; Mallen 2004, 2005; Turner 2006; George 2011, 2013; Pearce & George 2011). The most recent research project in Maclear has been concerned with the dating of images that used carbon black as the black pigment (Bonneau *et al*. 2011; Bonneau *et al.* 2012; Bonneau *et al*. 2014; Bonneau 2016; Bonneau, Pearce *et al*. 2017; Bonneau, Staff *et al*. 2017).

The most prominent research projects, however, have focused on the relationship between rock paintings and the history of interactions between different groups in the greater area around the Maclear District, primarily investigating the role of rock paintings in negotiating complex socio-political circumstances (Dowson 1994; Blundell 2004; Mallen 2008; Henry 2010). Following the debate on 'San history' between Thomas Dowson (1993) and Aron Mazel (1992, 1993), Dowson's (1994) structurationist study radically attempted to use different kinds of depictions of San shamans (as he called them) in rock paintings to construct a history of San social processes and changing social circumstances following ever intensifying contact between hunter-gatherers and Bantu-speaking farming communities. Although Dowson's argument has received some criticism, his study provided the basis for further research in the area. Geoffrey Blundell's (2004) published PhD thesis, which built on Dowson's work, remains the most comprehensive study of Maclear District rock art. Blundell (2004) critiqued and tried to move beyond previous approaches to San rock art by following postcolonial ideals, using body theory and drawing on ethnohistorical sources.

Dowson (1994) and Blundell (2004), as well as Lara Mallen (2008) and Leila Henry (2010), contributed constructions of San history in the Maclear area that implicate rock paintings in social and historical processes as well as in individual and group identity formation during times of changing social circumstances. Dowson (1994) and Blundell (2004) have nevertheless received criticism because of an absence of reliable chronology in each of their studies (Smith 2010: 351). Furthermore, the recently published radiocarbon determinations from the rock paintings in the Maclear District indicate that some of the images are older than was previously assumed, and some of the ideas behind arguments for the social

processes linked to the production and consumption of the rock paintings (Lewis-Williams 1994, 1995, 2001a) need to be revised (Bonneau *et al*. 2011: 427)[4].

The dating of the MR paintings is both a challenging practical problem and an interesting theoretical one. Only a handful of the images have black pigments that could potentially be dated if found to contain carbon. These would provide direct dates for the making of specific images, but one would still not know the temporal relationship between every image along the ridge or between every painted shelter. What is more, it is well-known that in shamanistic rock arts, of which San rock art is undoubtedly one (e.g., Lewis-Williams 2001a, 2002; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2004b; Lewis-Williams & Challis 2011), a sequence or series of paintings superimposed on one another need not be "solely or primarily a function of age" (Whitley 2005: 55). We may speculate that regardless of when the first painting on the MR, or in a shelter on it, was made, other paintings built up in the same place in relation to the paintings that were already there (e.g., Lewis-Williams 1974; Pearce & George 2011). Some researchers have approached the build-up of a sequence of rock paintings using the Harris matrix originally designed for excavated sequences (e.g., Mguni 1997; Russell 2000, 1997, 2012; Pearce 2002, 2006, 2010a; Swart 2004). Such work, in addition to the identification of a general sequence, has brought to light the likelihood of "regional, and possibly even site and intra-site, sequences within the general scheme" (Mazel 2009: 89). Nevertheless, the assessment of the stratigraphic relationships between rock paintings for chronology has been argued to be unreliable for paintings within one tradition (Pearce 2010a, but see Russell 2012), and it is, therefore, necessary to extrapolate for this dissertation from the findings of the *directly dated* sites in the Maclear District.

1.4: Ethnographic analogy and San performance

While conceptualising San image-making using performance studies helps to

[4] One of Blundell's significantly differentiated figures (SDFs) comes from MEL6 north, which is the only MR site with a panel containing subject matter that falls outside of the pre-contact hunter-gatherer context (Figure 1.4). How closely the two panels are related requires additional research.

discern and contextualise relationships, it is San ethnography, and not social theory, that helps us to *understand performance from a specifically San perspective*. Ideally, San ethnography informs social theory. It is, therefore, necessary to draw on relevant ethnohistorical documents that facilitate an informed approach to the relationship between performance and painted images.

The few documentary sources that are relevant to San image-making come almost exclusively from the Maclear District or areas close by (Orpen 1874; Stanford 1910; How 1962; Jolly 1986, 1997; Lewis-Williams 1980, 1986; Prins & Lewis 1992; Jolly & Prins 1994; Prins 1994, 2009). Those accounts alone are, however, insufficient to investigate the practice that led to the painted MR images. Nonetheless, it seems probable that the last San occupants of what is today the Maclear District would have seen the oldest preserved images, produced new images, and interpreted both in their terms and from their point of view. Though it is conceivable that the last image-makers in the Maclear District did not know the meanings of the older, traditional corpus of San painted imagery, a multiple fit has been demonstrated between the imagery of that corpus and details in several ethnographic sources (e.g., Lewis-Williams 1980, 1981a, 2015a: 57), some of which are comments by San people on panels of images (e.g., Orpen 1874; McGranaghan *et al*. 2013) or copies of images (e.g., Stow & Bleek 1930). It is therefore appropriate to use this San ethnography to interpret the traditional corpus of MR San imagery.

An implication drawn from the documentary sources is that statements on how the painted MR sites were made and viewed require detailed investigations of the following components: (1) San ethnography, (2) the features and morphology of each painted site, and (3) the painted MR imagery. We must also extend our discussion to San expressive culture as a whole. Today, most researchers accept that despite regional differences, there is overwhelming uniformity in non-material aspects of San culture across time and space, especially in expressive culture and religion (Lewis-Williams & Biesele 1978; Lewis-Williams 1981a; Barnard 1992, 2007; Biesele 1993; Guenther 1999; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2012a). The most uniform component of all is the trance or healing dance, which

has survived as a central institution of San society for thousands of years (Lewis-Williams 1981a; Barnard 1992; Biesele 1993: 74; Guenther 1999: 181; Low 2004; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2012a). Such uniformity allows for additional documentary sources, such as twentieth-century Kalahari Desert San ethnographies, to be used in tandem with the nineteenth-century ethnohistorical material from South Africa "*where commonalities can be demonstrated*" (Lewis-Williams 2013: 243, emphasis in original).

1.5: Documenting the MR sites

The documentation of the MR painted sites is a platform from which we can begin to describe and compare sites before discussing the imagery found in them. I investigate the trends and idiosyncrasies in the painted MR sites as patterns of differences and similarities. The investigation began with descriptions of each painted place and associated imagery. Recording of the painted sites was a three-stage process. First, the basic features of each shelter were described and the imagery at each site was photographed and described (Appendix A). Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates for each site were recorded using a handheld Garmin GPS (model 60) (Figure 1.2). In the second stage, length, depth and height measurements of each site were obtained using a handheld Hilti laser measure (Appendix B). These measurements were used to draft scaled schematic diagrams that indicate the overall size and shape of each site (Appendix C: Figures C.1–C.8). In the third stage, the painted MR sites were photographed in detail.

While a complete systematic survey of every cliff or boulder in the area surrounding the MR was beyond the time constraints of this dissertation, I surveyed part of it. Two unpainted rock shelters (UP1 and UP2) were found in a valley at right angles to the southern end of the MR (Figure 1.2B). They are interesting both for their lack of archaeological deposit and because they occur at a higher elevation than the sandstones of the MR in physically unstable iron-rich shales (a possible source of red pigments). Five new painted sites and one historical-period stone-walled structure (SWS)—to my knowledge not

documented before this project—were also found (see numbers 12–16 in Figure 1.2B). The field survey highlights that the MR, though notable for its dense concentration of sites, is not isolated from other sites: possible relationships between the MR and nearby sites cannot be ignored. Image-making occurred at each of these sites across the ridge and may well be connected to image-making at adjacent sites (e.g., Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990; Lewis-Williams 1994, 1995, 2001a).

1.6: The paintings

Qualitative and quantitative data on the shelters alone do not allow for any direct access to the image-making performances that took place there. Access to the performances, however partial, is, however, provided by the evidence for those performances in material form by the painted images. In addressing the painted MR imagery, I photographed every painted image, including fragmentary remnants of pigment, to understand where and what kinds of images were made on the ridge. Completing such an enterprise is naturally limited by issues of preservation and the inability to see very faded images. Nevertheless, the reasons for opting for photographic documentation were three-fold. First, the sheer number of images to be documented favoured an expedient and accurate technique for doing so. Second, to compare the sites, it was necessary to know what kinds of images were present at each MR site (Appendix D). The compilation of a visual record is only possible using photography and is far more useful than a tediously written and necessarily tendentious summary. Third, today's technology is dramatically different from when researchers first chose tracing and photography as complementary techniques for recording rock paintings.

1.7: Recording rock art images

The techniques used to record rock paintings have changed over the years. The early technique was to trace the painted image onto translucent paper (Orpen 1874; Tongue 1909; Stow & Bleek 1930; Breuil 1955: 16–18). Tracing paintings

and rubbing over engravings have since been criticised for the damage that they may cause as a result of contact with the rock face. The photographic revolution and subsequent digital photography have led to a multitude of non-contact recording techniques that can create realistic, undistorted renderings of painted and engraved images.

In the case of southern African rock art research, the change in techniques and technologies is readily apparent from a comparison of two key papers published twenty years apart. The older of the two papers stands firmly in defence of the contact tracing technique, while the more recent paper is part of the global digital revolution that favours the digital enhancement of high-resolution photographs of rock paintings. At a time when the contact tracing of rock paintings was receiving criticism (Bednarik 1990; Genge 1990), Jannie Loubser and Paul den Hoed, two experienced South African fieldworkers, put forward an argument in defence of tracing as it was then widely practised in South Africa (Loubser & den Hoed 1991). Their paper provides a detailed written description of an accurate, precise and technical tracing method that minimised damage to rock paintings[5], and compares the advantages and disadvantages of tracing to two other technologies that were available then: photogrammetry and photography. At the time when Loubser and den Hoed were writing, tracing was indeed the cheapest, fastest, most accurate and most accessible way of recording rock paintings. The technique had additional benefits because it forced researchers to spend hours at the rock face and to pay close attention to the details of the images. Photogrammetry (e.g., Chandler & Fryer 2005; Chandler *et al*. 2007; Jalandoni *et al*. 2018) and photography have, however, advanced at exponential rates while the tracing of images at the rock face has remained virtually unchanged.

Some twenty years after Loubser and den Hoed wrote their review, Jeremy Hollmann and Kevin Crause published remarkable digital enhancements of South African rock paintings that, in some cases, revealed images otherwise invisible to the naked eye (Hollmann & Crause 2011). Their work demonstrates a

[5] Tracers at that time, as today, avoided tracing where the rock was friable.

comprehensive means of recording rock paintings and has been recognised internationally (Le Quellec *et al*. 2015: 55, 65). Crause calls his high-resolution custom toolset CPED: Capture, Process, Enhance and Display. While some photographic enhancement techniques aim to (re-)produce digital tracings, or attempt to make images more visible at the cost of unrealistic colours, the CPED toolset delivers high-quality, pseudo-realistic, false colour results even if the naked eye could not see the original images at the start. His toolset and services are, however, expensive and beyond the financial reaches of most scholars and students.

1.8: Digital enhancements

Hollmann and Crause are by no means alone in their efforts to enhance rock paintings. Many other workers worldwide have embraced the "digital revolution" (Brady & Gunn 2012: 628), producing digital tracings that seek to emulate manual tracings as well as digital enhancements which make the images clear and easier to see. As digital tracings are schematic, I do not discuss them any further. Digital enhancements, however, can go further than tracings because they produce colour images that *show the original content of rock paintings in their original context*.

Image-enhancing software allows for digital photographs to be enhanced in replicable ways. The software ranges from commercially available programs, like Adobe Photoshop™, to specialist combinations, like Crause's CPED toolset which makes use of Adobe Lightroom™ and Adobe Photoshop™. Nevertheless, some are readily available, easy to use, and produce replicable results. The most significant benefit of digital enhancements for this dissertation is the capacity for digital enhancements to reveal 'invisible details' recorded by the camera but not perceived by the naked human optical system and also to expose errors of omission when compared with manual tracings (Le Quellec *et al*. 2013; Le Quellec *et al*. 2015).

The DStretch® plugin for ImageJ® developed by Jon Harman (2005) is one of the more widely used enhancement programs and was developed exclusively for enhancing images of petroglyphs and pictographs. DStretch® is based on a principle called decorrelation stretch in which the degree of difference between colours is 'stretched' to accentuate them (Gillespie *et al*. 1986; Rothery 1987; Gillespie 1992; Alley 1996; Guo & Moore 1996). DStretch® readily illustrates just how many details of rock paintings the naked eye does not see—no matter how closely observed (Le Quellec *et al*. 2013; Le Quellec *et al*. 2015). Such 'invisible' details remain unseen without modern photographic techniques.

To illustrate the effectiveness of digital enhancements, I return to MEL6 (Figure C.6) and compare two different renderings of a panel of quadrupedal therianthropic figures just to the left of Figure 1.1. In 1988, Thomas Dowson, a skilled and accurate rock art researcher, traced and then redrew the panel shown in Figure 1.4B, which was first published in Lewis-Williams & Dowson (1989). A redrawing of the tracing is shown in Figure 1.4A. While Dowson did note on his tracing some features that were too faint to trace and were excluded from the redrawing (see feature v in Figure 1.4C), others are over-simplified in, or missing from, the redrawing (see features x, y and z in Figure 1.4C). Given that variables such as light, weather conditions and time constraints—variables that affect even the most experienced fieldworkers—are uncontrollable, several painted details are excluded from his tracing and are absent from the final redrawing, suggesting that he was, for whatever reason, unable to see them at the rock face. Some of these omitted features ('v' and 'y') are visible in the photograph, and thus at the rock face, while others are nearly impossible for the naked eye to discern and are more easily visible with digital enhancements: feature 'x' in Figure 1.4A, the face of one of the quadrupedal therianthropes, lacks the facial details of a nose, lips and a tooth revealed by the enhancement shown in Figure 1.4; and feature 'z' in Figure 1.4A, the head of another quadrupedal therianthrope, is missing a set of horns that is visible with the enhancement shown in Figure 1.4Z.

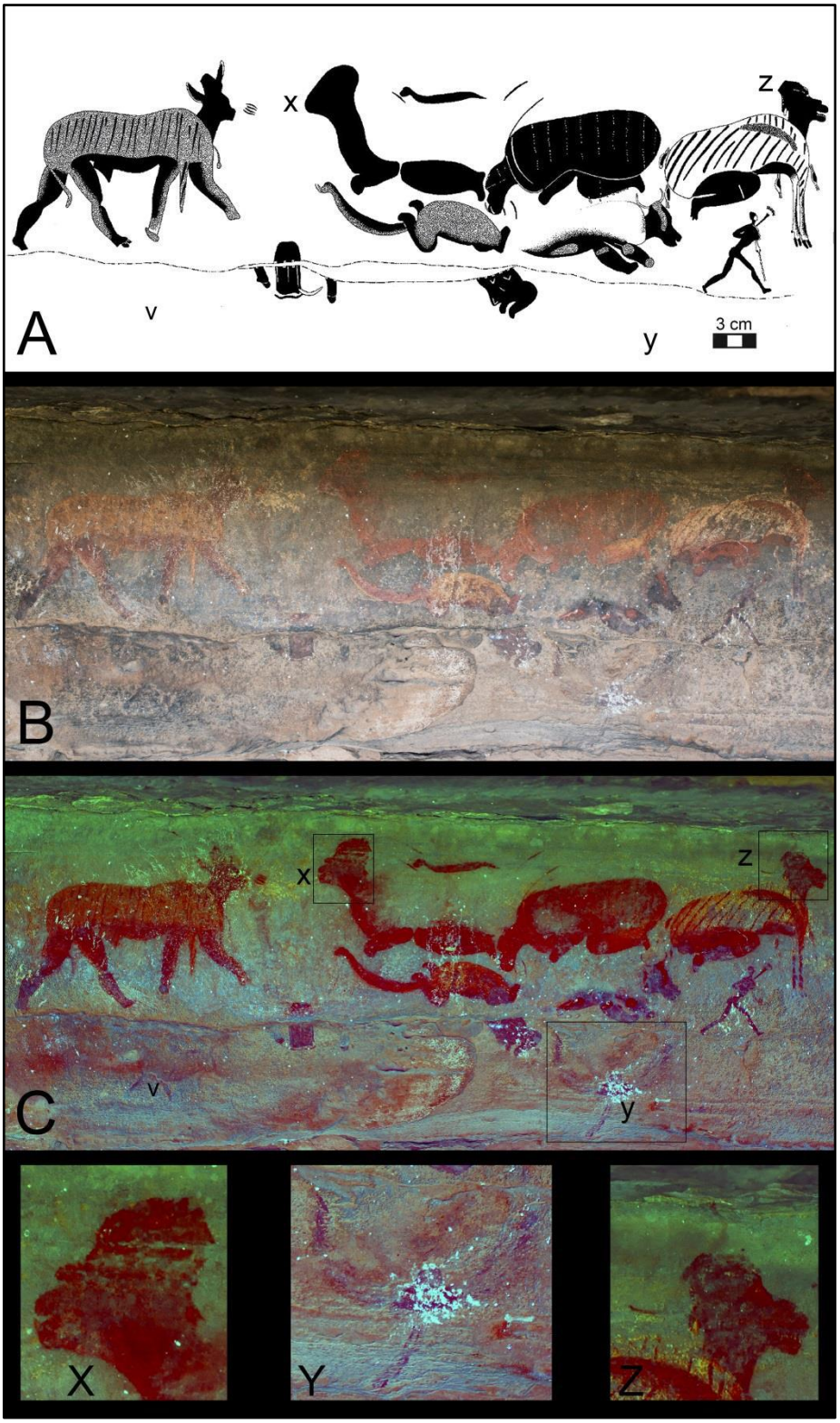


Figure 1.4. A panel at MEL6: comparing a redrawing to a digital enhancement. (A) Redrawing of the panel from the tracing. (B) Original photograph showing how the panel looks to the naked eye. (C) Digital enhancement using DStretch® (YRD). Compare features v, x, y and z in images A and C. Images X, Y and Z give enlarged details of the respective features x, y and z. Feature v is enlarged in Figure 5.18.

1.9: Enhancing the MEL ridge

With toolsets like CPED in existence, it is worth noting the potential, in some cases, to avoid the undesirably wild colours produced by DStretch® while still obtaining the same desirable results. Some researchers feel that, just as field tracings should not appear in publications, wildly-coloured digital enhancements should also not be published *if*, using setups like CPED, we can produce enhanced digital photographs that are clearer and have better colour than the original photographs. Realistically, each case will differ depending on the investigation and questions of each study. Sometimes, highly specialized technology is needed (e.g., Kamal *et al*. 1999; Leisen *et al*. 2013). Nevertheless, for this dissertation, the speed and efficiency of DStretch® were deemed generally sufficient to assist in addressing the overall aims because of the need to consider, as far as possible, all the MR images. Digital photographs are much faster to obtain than complete tracings which still have to then be meticulously redrawn.

I used DStretch® at two stages of this dissertation. First, the images at each MR site were counted from unenhanced, high-resolution photographs used together with the same photographs enhanced using DStretch®. The counts summarise the number of images per category per site (Appendix D). The second stage at which DStretch® was useful was the illustration of discussion points in the text. Both DStretch® enhancements and enhancements following the two procedures in Appendix E were produced, depending on the detail requiring illustration. The procedure followed is specified in the caption for each image.

1.10: From observations to theory

In this chapter, I have introduced some observations about the differences and similarities in the MR images. Despite being closely spaced, the sites do not constitute a stylistic cluster because the concept of ‘style’ is itself poorly defined for San rock paintings (e.g., Flett & Letley 2013: 3). I suggested that rock painting is far more akin to other forms of San expressive culture than has thus far been recognised, and that image-making was probably an expressive and performed activity.

This was the backdrop against which the notion of 'site' was problematized and which structured the documentation of the painted MR sites through quantitative and qualitative means. The MR sites feature in a body of research on the rock art and social processes in the history and prehistory of the Maclear District. Much of this research centres on themes or specific kinds of questions about social processes or chronology. In most cases, the scale of analysis, in particular the geographic range of the analysis, has been more general than that adopted here. Importantly, though there have been numerous studies of southern African rock art that consider, either explicitly or implicitly, aspects of the production and consumption of San imagery (e.g., Lewis-Williams & Challis 2010; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2004a, 2009, 2012b), few, if any, deal with a suite of spatially-close sites, such as that explored in this dissertation. Nevertheless, ethnohistorical documents from the Maclear area or areas close by (Orpen 1874; Stanford 1910; How 1962; Jolly 1986, 1997; Lewis-Williams 1980, 1986; Prins & Lewis 1992; Jolly & Prins 1994; Prins 1994, 2009), provide crucial information about image-making and image-viewing. Next, I elaborate the body of theoretical ideas concerning performance; this provides the framework for this dissertation.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1: Performance theory

> The drama analogy for social life has of course been around in a casual sort of way—all the world's a stage and we but poor players who strut and so on—for a very long time. And terms from the stage, most notably "role," have been staples of sociological discourse since at least the 1930s. What is relatively new—new, not unprecedented—are two things. First the full weight of the analogy is coming to be applied extensively and systematically, rather than being deployed piecemeal fashion—a few allusions here, a few tropes there. And second, it is coming to be applied less in the deprecatory "mere show," masks and mummery mode that has tended to characterize its general use, and more in a constructional, genuinely dramaturgical one—making not faking, as the anthropologist Victor Turner has put it (Geertz 1980: 171–172).

Over the last four decades, researchers have learned much about San expressive culture and rock paintings. Today, the symbolism of the San imagery (Vinnicombe 1976; Lewis-Williams 1972, 1981a) and the various ways in which paintings relate to one another (Lewis-Williams 1992a; Dowson 1994; Blundell 2004; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2004a, 2012b) are understood, the connections between the imagery and altered states of consciousness have been realized (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1988), and issues of chronology have been explored (Mazel 1992, 1993; Dowson 1993; Russell 1997, 2000, 2012; Mazel & Watchman 2003; Pearce 2010a, 2006; Bonneau *et al*. 2011; Bonneau *et al*. 2012; Bonneau *et al*. 2014; Bonneau 2016; Bonneau, Pearce *et al*. 2017; Bonneau, Staff *et al*. 2017).

All in all, we have begun to move, in Ray Inskeep's words, from learning about the art to learning from the art (Inskeep 1971: 101; see also Lewis-Williams *et al*. 2000: 128). But one outstanding quality of San rock art has remained under-

theorised: the act of making an image, often in the midst of many earlier images. To deal with this lacuna, I turn to the field of performance studies because it offers a means to theorise the making *and* viewing of rock paintings. It helps us to understand the complexity of image-making by going beyond an investigation of meaning to investigating how meaning is contingent on interactive processes.

2.2: Performance Studies and rock art research

The value of theory is that it directs attention to aspects of the data under investigation that would otherwise be neglected or not even noticed. In general, theory directs attention to relationships. The French anthropologist and ethnologist, Claude Lévi-Strauss, held that,

> [i]nstead of looking at the things themselves we [should] look at the relationships which prevail between them, then we will discover that these relationships are altogether more simple and less numerous than the things themselves, and that they can give us a firmer basis for investigation (Levi-Strauss 1979: 222).

I turn to performance studies and its theorisation of performances because, as Lévi-Strauss points out in general terms, theory guides us beyond the meanings of specific features of images—without ignoring them—to the positions that the images occupied in the network of San social relations and expressive culture as a whole. Performance theory, in particular, directs attention to a wide range of relationships including those between different painted images, images and places, image-makers and images, image-makers and viewers, image-makers and other image-makers, and image-makers and spirits. These relationships are *interactions*—some immediate, others more distant—implicated in the performances of making and viewing rock paintings. Crucially, while theory helps to discern and contextualise relationships, it is the San ethnography, and not social theory, that allows us to understand performance *from a San perspective*.

In this context, it is interesting to note that the relatively young and seemingly unrelated academic disciplines of performance studies and rock art research (particularly in southern Africa) share several stages of development. In brief,

both have drawn significant insights from studies of ritual, especially from anthropologists like Victor Turner (e.g., Lewis-Williams & Biesele 1978; Schechner 1985), and both were initially concerned with meaning and symbolism (e.g., Vinnicombe 1972a; Lewis-Williams 1972, 1981a; Schieffelin 1985; Inomata & Coben 2006). While that statement is necessarily broad and cannot apply to every individual case globally, the reasons for the parallel approaches in both research fields are intriguing. The early studies of ritual dichotomised thought and action (Bell 1997: x, see also Levi-Strauss 1969; Eliade 1978; Inomata & Coben 2006) and considerably influenced the discipline of performance studies. The same studies influenced landmark approaches to southern African rock art, but, I suggest, even more so because of an *inability to observe* the actual making of rock paintings—a situation not encountered by the anthropologists and performance studies scholars who were, for the most part, able to *attend* performances. In this sense, southern African rock art researchers carried out investigations of meaning using ethnography necessarily, and as a matter of consequence, *before* investigations of meaning-in-action (Vinnicombe 1972a, 1972b, 1976; Lewis-Williams 1981a, 1994, 2013).

The turn in studies of ritual towards a focus on the articulation of meaning in the context of people performing, embodied in performance studies, was fruitful (Schieffelin 1985: 707–709; Conquergood 2002: 45). Moving southern African rock art research from a meaning-centred approach toward one that focuses on the articulation of meaning in the context of the interactive processes of performance is likely to bear similar fruit. It is important to note that though I seek to engage directly with the performance studies literature, at both a local and a global scale, I am by no means the first to approach a corpus of rock art with the concepts of performance and ritual in mind (e.g., Lewis-Williams 1981a, 1994; Vastokas 1992; Ouzman 2001; Montelle 2009; Rifkin 2009; Jones 2012; Fowles & Arteberry 2013; Zawadzka 2016; Froese 2017; Hollmann 2017; Kinahan 2017a, 2017b; Ruuska 2017). Studies of ritual (e.g., Bell 1997) necessarily fall under the broader umbrella of performance studies (e.g., Schechner 2013). All rock art research which considers ritual aspects of rock art production and consumption is, therefore, related to the present study.

2.3: Performance Studies

'Performance studies' is not a social theory but rather an academic field of enquiry. Though the scholars within performance studies, as well as performance theorists, are concerned with theorising performance, neither the discipline of performance studies nor any allusion to 'performance theory' comprise holistic forms of Grand Theory (Mills 1959), such as one might read in the writings of Lévi-Strauss or Karl Marx. Nevertheless, much research within performance studies echoes in useful respects the tenets of theories of practice (Bourdieu 1977; Schieffelin 1998: 199). The origins of performance studies lie with the American theatre director Richard Schechner's pioneering ethnography of the performing arts, British anthropologist Victor Turner's contemporaneous work on ritual, and the intellectual meeting of those two scholars (Turner 1982; Schechner 1985, 1988, 2013; Bial 2004; Horanyi 2013).

Studies of performance focus on behaviours that are actions displayed in relation to others, be they humans or otherwise. Consequently, the student of performance studies is interested in "what people do in the activity of their doing it" (Schechner 2013: 1). It is the subversive aim of such scholars to "act on or act against settled hierarchies of ideas, organisations, and people" (Schechner 2013: 4). Consequently, any attempt at a consolidated definition or neat 'outline' of performance studies is flawed because concepts within the field of study are necessarily contested (Bial 2004; Schechner 2013: 4). Relatively few archaeological studies globally have used and applied insights directly from performance studies (e.g., Meskell 1999; Joyce 2000; Pearson & Shanks 2001; Inomata & Coben 2006). Nevertheless, and because few archaeologists (including rock art researchers) are familiar with performance studies, I provide some definitions and examples.

Schechner writes that,

> performance studies does not "read" an action or ask what "text" is being enacted. Rather, one inquires about the "behavior" of, for example, a painting: how, when, and by whom was it made, how it interacts with those who view it, and how the painting changes

> over time. The artifact may be relatively stable, but the performances it creates or takes part in can change radically. The performance studies scholar examines the circumstances in which the painting was created and exhibited; she looks at how the gallery or building displaying the painting shapes its reception. These and similar kinds of performance studies questions can be asked of any behavior, event, or material object (Schechner 2013: 2).

Schechner's approach to performance highlights a kind of approach we can usefully adopt for an inquiry of interactions, both present and past. While seemingly broad, many of the questions that Schechner asks align with issues facing researchers who are interested in rock painting practices—topics on which rock paintings, history, and ethnography can be frustratingly mute.

The making of rock paintings falls under the umbrella of performance studies because it falls first within the broad category of 'people doing things'. This approach directs attention away from 'the art' and 'the artists' as though they were all the same. Performance theory points to the nature of the interactions between specific people who made and viewed specific images because the making of an image was in every case a particular performance. The applicability of the performance-oriented approach to southern African rock art research is high, given the previous attempts to understand the interactive social processes behind the making and viewing of San imagery (Lewis-Williams 1994, 1995, 2001a; see Chapter 4).

The discipline of performance studies provides a framework for investigating a *practice* which includes the making and viewing of imagery, such as once took place on the MR, by identifying and describing the kinds of *performances* involved in that practice. By way of definition:

> The term 'practice' focuses on that aspect of human life and activity which is structured largely through unquestioned, unthought habit, through which human beings normally carry out the business of living *both in everyday life and in important strategic situations* (Schieffelin 1998: 199, emphasis added).

As we shall see, the capacity of an image-maker to be strategic during the making of images is but one novel way that we might think about San rock painting performances. Further discussion of MR rock painting requires, however, that we move away gradually from a loose, large scale to a firmer, smaller, and more precise scale with better definitions.

2.4: Performance

Simply put, "a performance is an activity done by an individual or group in the presence of and for another individual or group"; in some cases, while the performers might be physically present, the audience may be implied, such as with certain gods or spirits (Schechner 1988: 29). 'Performance', however, remains a difficult word to define because its multiple meanings are contested (Strine *et al.* 1990), a situation made all the more complex by differences in usage that accompany the breakdown of disciplinary divides (Inomata & Coben 2006: 12). The word has connotations of theatre and actors on a stage, but Schechner has argued that such a definition is too narrow:

> Performance is an inclusive term. Theater is only one node on a continuum that reaches from the ritualizations of animals (including humans) through performances in everyday life—greetings, displays of emotion, family scenes, professional roles, and so on—through to play, sports, theater, dance, ceremonies, rites, and performances of great magnitude (Schechner 1988: x).

Schechner's continuum is broad, and the contested nature of the definition of performance shows that not everyone agrees with him. Nevertheless, the scope of his continuum means that it is widely applicable, and this quality is valuable to the aims of this dissertation because *the nature of the performance* in which rock paintings participate, even though we are ethnographically informed (Chapter 4), is *unknown*.

The broad definition of performance need not, however, remain lofty and abstract. Performance theorist Martin Carlson provides clarification: performances involve the *display* of a behaviour or action. Otherwise, the action is simply something

that ‘is done’. The involvement of display can differ in kind, being either the display of a particular skill, such as dancing or painting, or the display of “a recognized and culturally coded pattern of behaviour” as with social practices (Carlson 1996: 4–5). While the display is, in the simplest case, part of the role of the performer, it is the role of the observers to *assess* it (Carlson 1996: 5).

The American anthropologist Edward Schieffelin[6] is less well-known in the performance studies literature than Schechner or Carlson. His highly detailed ethnographic research with the Kaluli of Papua New Guinea has, nevertheless, usefully built on established ideas by providing exemplary case studies and discussions of the contingent processes of performance (Schieffelin 1985, 1996, 1998). Schieffelin points out that because observers always assess the performers, performances contain an element of *risk*, and thus have the potential to go wrong (Schieffelin 1998). And, because a performance ‘does’ something, there is also always something *accomplished* (Schieffelin 1998: 198).

2.5: Ritual

San ethnographic sources suggest that the making and viewing of images were a part of a ritualised process (see Chapter 4). It is, therefore, beneficial to the present study to have a better understanding of what ‘ritual’ means before we proceed. The French ethnographer and folklorist, Arnold van Gennep, suggested a three-phase division of *rites de passage*: pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal (van Gennep 1960). The liminal phase is key: during that phase, the ritual subject’s social category is highly ambiguous and is neither entirely what it was in the pre-liminal phase, nor entirely what it will be in the post-liminal phase[7]. People undergoing initiation experience such liminal phases. Subsequent scholars have built on van Gennep’s work and extended it to apply to a wider range of ritual activity. Victor Turner is notable for developing van Gennep’s theory of ritual to characterise both liminal performances, which mark *permanent social*

[6] Schieffelin was present at the seminal 1966 *Man the Hunter* conference (Lee & DeVore 1968: 215).
[7] This state of ontological ambiguity is sometimes expressed as simultaneously ‘*not A’* and ‘*not not B’*.

transformations from one category to another, such as initiation ceremonies, and liminoid performances, in which participants are not permanently transformed (the performance is pseudo-transformative) but are *transported* from one circumstance to another and finally returned to the original circumstance at the end (e.g., Turner 1974, 1985: 296). Turner highlights what he calls *communitas* and anti-structure as powerful and effective components of the ritual process (Turner 1969). By their very nature, rituals abolish alterity and bind people of different social standing together, even and especially when normal circumstances would not condone such behaviour.

While all rituals or ritualised processes have standard features (Turner 1969; Rapport 1999: 23–68), which allow for ritual to be defined as "a *transformative performance* revealing major classifications, categories, and contradictions of cultural processes" (Turner 1988: 15, emphasis added; see also Rappaport 1999: 23–68), such a definition is an analytical construct. Definitions of ritual are highly abstract and conceptual in that they provide an etic definition useful to the anthropologist for something that remains, conceptually, without emic definition. In this dissertation, it is not through a stepwise process of elimination with the aid of a rigid definition of ritual on a case-by-case basis that we will be able to understand the nature of the performances that accompany the making and viewing of MR images. Instead, we must understand the nature of the connected interactions within that process (cf. Levi-Strauss 1979: 222).

Addressing the nature of the ritual performance involving San images addresses a question hidden in plain sight every time the word ritual is used to describe the making of San images: 'ritual' categorises the behaviours under investigation but it does not necessarily explain or elaborate on those behaviours. The term is at risk of creating an air of mystery: an archaic ritual activity, it would seem, is so beyond the archaeologist's grasp that we cannot say more *about* the ritual. Performance theory, however, allows us to attempt to go beyond description and speak of the potential interactions that occurred when such a ritual activity actually took place.

I quote Clifford Geertz in the epigraph to this chapter, who points out that

references to roles and metaphors of the stage have been used commonly in the past, but we can now conduct an analysis in which the notion of performance is productively analogical and usefully constructive. The analysis in this dissertation pivots on whether the San process of making images *is* a performance and would have been acknowledged as so, at least in principle, by its practitioners, or whether the researcher treats the activity *as if* it were a performance through the lens of performance studies (Schechner 2013: 38–40).

Given what is known about San expressive culture in general (e.g., Schapera 1930: 202–222; England 1967, 1968; Weissener & Larsson 1979; Lewis-Williams 1981a; Barnard 1992; Biesele 1993; Guenther 1994, 2006, 2007), it is highly unlikely, if not improbable, that the making of images was not a performance in at least some significant ways. It is, however, necessary to *demonstrate* the performance qualities of the San practice of image-making through a cumulative argument that draws on the literature of performance studies, rock art research, ethnohistorical documents, and specific MR paintings. It is, indeed, all too easy for contrived theory to remain disconnected from data, and having a rich ethnographic record which details the nuances of San expressive culture is a highly advantageous position relative to other geographic areas that are forced to rely on archaeological evidence or rock paintings alone for the reconstruction of performances in relation to rock art (cf. Montelle 2009; Rogers 2011).

2.6: Performativity

Ethnography and the theorisation of performances are both especially helpful supplements to material culture records when dealing with performativity. In one sense, 'performativity' merely describes a quality of things that perform. It has, however, been variously defined (Horanyi 2013). It has two forms, either as an adjective or noun. As an adjective, the word is synonymous with but not directly equivalent to 'theatrical'. As a noun, it refers, in the strictest sense, to words that constitute (embody) actions when they are said. This second meaning derives from J. L. Austin's (1962) *How to do things with words* and featured prominently in Judith Butler's (1988) studies of the performativity of gender. In the context of

ritual, Roy Rappaport has glossed performativity as "conventional procedures for achieving conventional effects" (Rappaport 1999: 124). Nevertheless, like 'performance studies' and 'performance,' performativity remains a contested concept that has no widely accepted definition (e.g., Parker & Sedgwick 1995; Horanyi 2013). In this dissertation, I use 'performativity' largely in the sense of 'theatrical', following Schieffelin, who sees performativity as "manifest in the expressive aspect of the 'way' something is done on a particular occasion" (Schieffelin 1998: 199). I follow this definition because the way that specific but culturally contextualised actions are carried out can have both intended and unintended consequences, and is therefore related to the inherent element of risk mentioned earlier; directly affecting those involved in the performance, such as performers, participants and observers, and indirectly affecting other parties beyond the performance event.

Importantly, performance and performativity articulate when people, however socially or ontologically constructed or recognized, are engaged in situations of social practice because performance and performativity are strictly *interactive* processes (Schieffelin 1998: 200). Social relations are thus of the utmost importance. It is crucial to note that *performances will necessarily change* to some degree with the passage of time "because situations and the people that participate in them are always only analogous to each other; they are never exactly the same" (Schieffelin 1998: 199, citing Bourdieu 1977: 83). The implication for the MR imagery is that, if the images can be shown to result from performances, then some of the variability in painted content may result from variability in the process behind the making of the images. For this dissertation, it is necessary to demonstrate that different image-making events constitute different performances (i.e. one performance is different from but analogous to the next), and that the overall practice of image-making, and any attendant performance, is broadly continuous through time unless there are demonstrable differences (i.e. where one performance is fundamentally different, and demonstrates observable change relative to a previous performance, such as when San rock painting is, to put it in the simplest terms, 'mixed up' with colonial-period subject matter, other beliefs, practices and cultural identities [e.g., Challis 2008, 2012]).

Both because "situations and the people that participate in them are always only analogous to each other" (Schieffelin 1998: 199) and because "performances produce effects and these effects are sustained by repetition" (Jones 2012: 145), theorizing performance deals simultaneously with the differences and similarities in the MR imagery. A performance-oriented approach, therefore, provides a useful framework for comparing and contrasting differences and similarities in San expressive culture which necessarily comprises different kinds of performances. An investigation of similarity and difference, however, cannot take place until we understand performance *from a San perspective*.

2.7: The ethnography of performance

One of the aims of using performance studies in this dissertation is to draw analogies between different performance contexts in San culture. It is necessary, therefore, to acknowledge that theories of performance carry implications realised from a comparison of Western performances with performances in other cultures: not *all* performances embrace equivalent actor-audience relationships (Schechner 1988: 29; Schieffelin 1985, 1996, 1998).

Schieffelin (1985, 1996, 1998), among others, actively problematizes the commonly-held Western notion and understanding of 'performance'. He cautions against the use of simple Aristotelian theatre metaphors that favour restricted actor-audience oppositions. Instead, he underscores the benefits of considering how the contingent process, context and performativity of performances facilitate the social construction of reality, that is, a communal consensus of belief and agreement on a broad range of topics (Schieffelin 1985; see Chapter 6). He is not the first to remind us that other performances exist outside of the Aristotelian dramatic tradition in the Western world such that the relationship between performers and observers is dynamic, in which the observers may also be participants and the boundaries between 'real' and 'non-real' are blurred (Schieffelin 1998). As I detail in this dissertation, these points apply to performances in San culture: it is unlikely to be by chance that 'reality' and 'non-reality' is a pervasive and blurred theme in San cosmology and rock paintings

(e.g., Lewis-Williams 1988).

2.7.1: A Kaluli séance

Before addressing performance from a San perspective, it is useful to have a comparative practical example in mind. To this end, a brief description of Schieffelin's analysis of the Kaluli séance is informative because it highlights both how complex interactions at a performance can be and how spirits are able to participate in performances. While I do not suggest any direct cultural analogy from the Kaluli to the San, there are illustrative points of similarity and dissimilarity between their performances.

Among the Kaluli, a group living in Papua New Guinea, a medium is a man of no particular social standing who has married a spirit woman and, when he has fathered a spirit child by her, can leave his body during a séance to visit the spirit realm (e.g., Schieffelin 1985, 1998). At that time, spirits can enter his body. Séances are generally, but not exclusively, held when villagers approach the medium to assist with the curing of an illness or the finding of a lost pig. As for the San, the world of the living and the world of the spirits intersect in many ways, particularly at natural features that are understood symbolically and cosmologically. Both worlds mirror each other to some extent and the cause for illness is rooted in the spirit world when, for example, a living person's spirit pig or cassowary (a kind of flightless bird) is trapped or hunted by spirit people. It is the task of the medium to travel to the spirit world and determine the nature of the illness with the assistance of his spirit child.

When people request a séance, the medium may accept or refuse the request and may use the tension or urgency of the situation to muster anticipation. A séance is always held at night in complete darkness and begins when a medium lies supine on a bed in the men's area of the longhouse. Around him sit the men, responsive and vocal participants, who comprise the *kegel*. Women are restricted to the women's section and are more passive participants.

> When all is ready, the fires of the longhouse are banked to provide almost complete darkness. After a while there is a long hissing breath from the medium, which indicates that his soul is leaving his body. This is followed by gasping sounds and birdcalls as the first spirit (usually the medium's spirit child by his spirit wife) arises and softly begins to sing. The song, nostalgic and moving, is invariably about the hills and streams near where the spirit lives. The *kegel*, chorusing the spirit, are drawn [into] the same mood. When the song ends, the spirit identifies itself and people ask him to go and take a look at the invisible aspect of the sick person. The spirit child then departs and searches the spirit realm to see if the patient's wild pig aspect is caught in a trap. If it is, he will release it, and if the pig runs away, the person will recover (Schieffelin 1985: 711).

In this case, the medium has a specific task to heal by using his ability to mediate between the world of the living and the world of the spirits. His success in accomplishing the task is not guaranteed, nor is his failure: it depends mostly on his strategic adaptation to the performance, that is, how he interacts with the participants *and* what the participants do. The process is contingent. The influence of the participants, or observers, on the medium cannot be ignored. Even if the sick person dies, the medium can be said to have accomplished his task by providing, through the spirits whom the participants believe to be beyond the influence of the medium, a satisfactory answer to the life-or-death questions asked (Schieffelin 1985: 718–719).

Schieffelin's work with the Kaluli séance opens up several avenues for the study of similar performances in San culture and the nature of MR image-making performances. First, spirits—socially constructed entities—can be active participants or performers. According to Schieffelin (1985: 715), when the spirits visit the medium's body, they are not real, but are, in fact, several vocal projections of the medium, observably different from but related in pitch and tone to the medium's normal voice (see Chapter 6.5 for a discussion of reality). The different voices, however, *must be regarded as performers* because, from the perspective of the participants present at the séance, they are engaging with the spirits because *the medium is not in the room* but is away in another realm (Schieffelin 1985: 715).

A second avenue is the possibility that a social performance need not have only an active performer and a passive audience. The participants at a Kaluli séance interact with the medium or mediums in a variety of ways, such as responding to the spirits, commenting on the information conveyed and, by the nature and content of their responses, *inadvertently* provide the medium with the means to *strategically* construct appropriate responses (Schieffelin 1985, 1998). The medium's responses, while subtle, paint a picture in the mind of each séance participant influenced by background information, preconceptions and cultural understanding. The dialogic, dynamic interaction between the medium and the participants in the context of a séance is a site for the articulation of culturally specific meanings that socially construct reality, such as understandings of the causes of illness or why a person will surely die and who is responsible (Schieffelin 1985).

The third avenue opened up by Schieffelin's work allows us to explore how performativity, the ways in which things are done, can be a significant component of some performances. Schieffelin has argued that "performativity is of central importance mainly in *highly contingent, dialogic, and improvisational* kinds of performance" (Schieffelin 1998: 82; emphasis added). During the séance, the *way* in which the audience responds to the words of the spirits (the behaviour of the medium) affects how the séance progresses, regardless (but not entirely independent) of how many times similar séances have taken place.

2.8: San expressive culture and performances

Although the discipline of performance studies is unfamiliar in San rock art research, the concept of performance is itself not novel to the study of San culture. Mathias Guenther has described San "trance dance, pictorial art and oral literature" as comprising San 'expressive culture', arguing that San "[a]rt and ritual (specifically the trance dance) are of a kind" (Guenther 1994: 265, see also Guenther 1989, 2006, 2007). Like material culture, which describes the material aspects of culture, expressive culture describes aspects of culture expressed through visual and dramatic forms, such as storytelling, singing, dancing, music,

and the making of imagery. The notion of 'expressive culture' is not here particularly interesting, nor does it bring some new insight to an otherwise amorphous group of activities. Rather, it is important here because several San ethnographers, including Guenther, use the term to characterise a suite of performative activities (Katz 1982a: 143; Biesele 1993: 101).

Many details of San expressive culture and performances[8] were recorded in ethnohistorical documents from the 19th and 20th centuries. Early travellers and missionaries to southern Africa describe several San cultural activities, such as dance, storytelling, music, and rock art (Arbousset & Daumas 1846: 246–247; Orpen 1874; Stanford 1910; Bleek & Lloyd 1911). Ethnographers working during the 20th century identified many of the same cultural activities among different San groups and described them as *performances* (e.g., Silberbauer 1965, 1981; England 1967; Lee 1967, 1968; Marshall 1969; Biesele 1978, 1993; Wiessner & Larson 1979; Katz 1982a).

The most important, indeed central, ritual performance among the San is the trance dance (Lee 1968: 36; Marshall 1969: 347–348; Katz 1982b: 344; Guenther 1999: 181). It is remarkable because it was observed and described both by early European travellers to southern Africa and later ethnographers, and it is widely depicted in San painted imagery either explicitly as scenes or implicitly as fragments (Vinnicombe 1976; Lewis-Williams 1980, 1999: 281; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2004b: 99–100; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2012a; see also Lewis-Williams 2015a: 149–172). It is worth noting here that much San rock art, quite apart from being inspired by, or related to experiences in the dance, actually depicts the dance and its attendant postures and accoutrements. The trance dance is so similar among different San groups across southern Africa that at least one ethnographer who worked with the !Xõ did not, in one publication, describe that dance but referred to the lengthy descriptions provided for the same dance among the Ju|'hoansi and Nharo (Heinz 1975). Another, in a synthesis of San trance

[8] If Schechner's continuum of performance is adopted, as it is in this dissertation, there is some redundancy to speaking in terms of both 'expressive culture' *and* 'performances'.

activity, provided a detailed bibliography of specific groups and proceeded to speak in general terms on specific topics (Guenther 1999: 182).

There are, of course, other kinds of performances in San culture. The performative aspects of music (England 1967, 1968), of rituals that accompany initiation ceremonies (Guenther 1999: 164–179; Marshall 1999: 187–218) and those of other dances like the Eland Bull Dance (Marshall 1999: 195–200) and the Drum Dance (Lee 2003: 135–137) are readily apparent. One might, however, easily consider the expressive, performative aspects of other activities, such as narrative storytelling (Biesele 1993), accounts of trance experience (Biesele 1993: 76–79), hunting (Marshall Thomas 2006: 105; Guenther 2007) and play (Bleek 1928: 18–21; Marshall 1969: photograph 13, 327; Katz 1973: 142), which all fall within Schechner's performance continuum. Together with the communal trance dance, these forms of San expressive culture share themes that are reminiscent of the theme of difference and similarity on the MR but are manifest (as they may be) as tradition and idiosyncrasy, rigour and freedom, or individual and community (e.g., England 1967; Wiessner & Larsson 1979; Silberbauer 1981: 177–178; Barnard 1992: 263–264; Biesele 1993: 76–79, 95; Guenther 1999: 56–57, 81–82, 135,140, 197; Marshall Thomas 2006: 211–225; Hewitt [1986] 2008: 42).

They do not, however, necessarily share content or structural qualities. Not all singing and dancing happens in the same contexts or for the same reasons, and the way in which one might regard a renowned storyteller is different from how one might perceive a respected and experienced dancer[9]. Nevertheless, for this dissertation, we might note that, in broad terms, *some* San performances are atypical of quotidian circumstances while others are part and parcel of the goings-on of everyday lives. In any event, to understand the performance context of the central religious ritual performance of San life is to be in a better position to comparatively assess the performance qualities of image-making and -viewing.

[9] Among the G|wi for example, "[p]restige is gained from the exercise of skills and there are many opportunities for winning prestige, but the individuals are not compared and ranked by prestige. An esteemed musician stands neither above nor below a skilled herbalist, midwife, or narrator, and each comes in for his or her share of acclaim and admiration" (Silberbauer 1981: 177).

It is at this point important to stress that *a textual summary of a performance is not equivalent to the performance itself*. A performance, while a product of previous episodes and events, only exists as a performance. This means that, despite the fact that a performance and its associated text resemble each other in broad terms, the written description of a live performance introduces an orthodoxy that obliterates the authentic performance context: "[w]hile texts and performances may be produced out of one another, this is very different from saying they are reducible to one another. Text can never be 'duplicated' in performance, and performance is not reducible to text" (Schieffelin 1998: 199)[10].

In her study of Ju|'hoan storytelling, the American anthropologist Megan Biesele has echoed this sentiment for a culturally specific practice:

> Because the storytelling way of making social sense is by its nature continually creative and re-creative; it actually has its being only in its new performances. That is why variants in oral life are as uncountable as grains of sand. People who only encounter folktales in print should realise that any collection of living folktales is an accident (Biesele 1993: 65).

When summarising and explicating kinds of San performance, it is impossible to ignore the variable quality of performances. Performances are necessarily variable, and the result is that no two accounts, collections, or explanations, need necessarily be identical.

Performances exist at particular periods and places and involve specific people. Nevertheless, certain descriptive details in textual accounts of performed activities reveal something of the nature of each episodic performance. Such descriptive details are indispensable: they provide an insight otherwise only derived from attending the performance itself.

From the descriptive details in a textual account of trance dance performances in the Kalahari, we know that the words sung by dancing owners-of-potency can be

[10] Consider, for example, two stage actors auditioning for the same role and using identical scripts. Even if both actors follow the script, their individual performances are different and each performance is not equivalent to the script itself.

highly idiosyncratic (Wiessner & Larson 1979: 30). Comparing written versions of similar tales performed by |Xam story-tellers shows "that even if Bleek and Lloyd [the recorders] influenced the direction of the tales, the narrators felt free to combine, eliminate and, especially, elaborate the episodes and auxiliary episodes as they wished" (Lewis-Williams 1997: 196, citing Hewitt 1986). Lewis-Williams has built onto the folkloristic work of Biesele to draw a parallel between 'give-away' words in narrative storytelling and details depicted in rock paintings, terming details pregnant with social associations 'nuggets' (Biesele 1996:145; Lewis-Williams 2015a: 42–45). Such details allow us to move from the specifics of singular performances to generalisations about the *nature* of episodic practices. They enable us to move from observing highly idiosyncratic moments, in which the performers and participants are involved in the contingent processes of the performance, to discussing traditional episodes.

A final point relates to the navigation of idiosyncrasy in a sea of tradition. Speaking of San narrative storytelling in general, Guenther notes that:

> the innovativeness and creativeness the narrator [performer] brings to her performance has to be held in check by the forces of tradition and orthodoxy that derive from the content and form of the narrative [performance], as well as from the moral tastes of the audience [observers] (Guenther 1999: 135, parentheses added).

As we shall see, the above is widely applicable to San expressive culture and holds for performances of the trance dance (Chapter 3) and, importantly, for the making of rock paintings.

2.9: From theory to ethnography

Performances comprise a continuum of behaviours. Some, such as initiation ceremonies and rites of passage, are highly specific and unusual in the sense that they only take place at certain times and places and only involve particular people. Others, like games, are usually open to anyone and may be played anytime and anywhere. Under the umbrella of performance are different instances of performances which differ in context and content.

In this chapter, I have introduced the field of performance studies, defined several terms and briefly introduced some connections between performance studies and southern African rock art research, underscoring that moving beyond a meaning-centred approach to painted imagery will benefit and improve our understanding of the practice of San rock painting. I have shown that performance studies is concerned with what people do in the activity of their doing it, and, with reference to the Kaluli séance, in what ways performers, participants and observers interact during performances. These interactions are avenues for further exploration with implications for a consideration of performance relative to the practice of San rock painting. With a general frame established within which to consider specifically San performances, it is necessary for us to keep in mind that San expressive culture comprises several different performance contexts that are ethnographically and historically documented which nevertheless share related themes. Given the scope of San expressive culture, which includes but is not limited to communal trance dances and episodes of narrative story-telling, it is likely that the making of rock paintings was implicated, not in a purely visual painted tradition reminiscent of Western art, but rather in a series of culturally-specific ritualised performances. Next, I explore the most well-known and most elaborate San ritual performance, the communal trance dance, as an example of a San performance that can inform our thinking of the making and viewing of rock paintings in terms of the avenues introduced by Schieffelin's example of the Kaluli séance and the themes of San expressive culture.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1: Dancing and painting: a performative dyad?

The literature on the San communal trance dance is voluminous. It covers several different linguistic groups that lived at various times across southern Africa. The dance is, essentially, a healing ritual during which certain owners-of-potency enter altered states of consciousness and use *n|om*, a supernatural energy, to remove sickness placed into the community by spirits-of-the-dead. The success of the performance depends on interactions at the dance, some of which cross ontological spheres. Although the San trance dance is one of the most ethnographically documented performances, I review some of that literature here in order to highlight components that are relevant to the following chapters. I therefore pay particular attention to specific interactions to emphasise the fact that social relations and choices affect *each performance of the communal dance uniquely*. Ignoring this fact risks homogenising variability and the subtle, dynamic, and socially significant interactions between performers and participants that affect the direction and outcomes of performances. Such interactions have context and it is for the purpose of providing a detailed backdrop for the discussion of specific interactions that I outline a general trance performance. It is derived from composite studies of ethnographers[11] working principally with Ju|'hoansi (!Kung) and, to a lesser extent, G|wi groups in the Kalahari during the 20th century (e.g., Lee 1967; Marshall 1969; Silberbauer 1965, 1981; Katz 1982a). Crucially, *there are no fundamental differences between Ju|'hoansi healing rites and other San groups,* though there are undoubtedly different choreographies and different emphases between groups.

[11] See Guenther 1999: 256 (note 1 under chapter 8) for an extended bibliography of ethnographic accounts of the trance dance from the Ju|'hoansi, the Nharo, the |Xam, the G|wi and the !Xõ.

3.2: Trancing with friends, dancing with death

"The trance dance", wrote Mathias Guenther (1999: 181), "is the central ritual of the Bushman religion and its defining institution" (see also Katz 1982b: 344). Documentary sources and San rock paintings evidence that the southern San practised the dance (Arbousset & Daumas 1846: 246–257; Orpen 1874: 10; Stow 1905: 111; Lewis-Williams 1980, 1981a; Cullinan 1992: 69; Lewis-Williams & Challis 2011: 51-72; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2012a). Several ethnographers observed multiple performances of the trance dance among northern San groups (e.g., Silberbauer 1965, 1981, Lee 1967, 1968, 2003; Marshall 1969; Guenther 1975; Heinz 1975; Wiessner & Larsson 1975; Katz 1982a; Biesele 1993). It is in this context that we find the essential components that will later enable me to consider the paintings as interactive participants in image-making and image-viewing performances.

Among the Ju|'hoansi, as well as other San groups, a healer is a person who can, after many years of learning how to control a powerful supernatural energy, 'pull'(as the San say) the sickness placed into the living by the spirits-of-the-dead and in that way heal them[12]. This healing happens at communal trance dances and also at more private, though not exclusive, special curing ceremonies. Richard Lee describes the trance dance among the Ju|'hoansi as "a culturally stereotyped set of behaviours which induces an altered state of consciousness through auto-suggestion, rhythmic dancing, intense concentration, and hyperventilation" (Lee 1968: 36). San trance states thus have a definite neurophysiological component. The *culturally stereotyped* set of behaviours is important: specific actions, who performs them, when they happen, and who sees them, all occur in the context of a group for whom the actions are already *known and understood*. Indeed, they are expected (Biesele 1993: 72; Lewis-Williams 2001a: 26). Otherwise, the performance could not be such a socially significant occasion for all who attend (Marshall 1969: 347; Katz 1982a: 34; Guenther 1999: 182; cf. Schieffelin 1985: 709).

[12] Among the G|wi, sickness comes not from spirits-of-the-dead but from the Lesser god called G||amama or G||awama, who shoots 'evil' arrows down from above (Silberbauer 1981: 54).

Perhaps the most unusual feature of a trance dance performance, at least for the Western outsider, is that everyone is free to attend the event and there is no discrimination of gender or age: the dance is open to all (Lee 1967; Marshall 1969: 347–349; Katz 1982a: 34, 52). The observers at a trance dance performance are thus not socially distinct. Sometimes people from other bands walk kilometres through the night to join in (Marshall 1969: 353–354). "Persons are never excluded from a dance" (Katz 1982a: 59). The Ju|'hoansi believe that it is dangerous for any of the band's resident members to remain alone away from the dance because of the high concentration of *n|om* at the dance and the spirits-of-the-dead that lurk beyond the firelight (Marshall 1969: 350; but see Katz 1982a: 143–144). Since the dance is such a communal and highly interactive performance, it is also an occasion for social activities: dancing, talking, gossiping, playing, and flirting (Lee 1967: 31, 33; Marshall 1969: 349, 356; Katz 1982a: 52). "What Westerners might call the "sacred" and the "profane" merge playfully and dramatically at the dance" (Katz 1982a: 52).

The defining quality of the trance dance is, however, that it is an occasion for some individuals in the community to perform healing, to 'pull' sickness out of others via their control of supernatural potency. Curing at the dance "is harmonious or synergistic with maintenance and growth on both the *individual and cultural levels*" (Katz 1973: 139, emphasis added)—echoing the themes of idiosyncrasy and traditional, difference and similarity for the MR painted sites.

A crucial element in the performance of healing is *n|om. N|om* (Ju|'hoan, see Marshall 1969: 350–351), or *!gi*: (|Xam, see Lewis-Williams 1992b: 58), is a kind of potency that resides in many things and is both powerful and dangerous. Lorna Marshall metaphorically likened its properties to those of electricity (Marshall 1969: 351). A person who can control *n|om* is called *n|omkxao* (Ju|'hoan, pl. *n|omkxaosi*)[13] or *!gi:xa* (|Xam, pl. *!gi:ten*): literally, a 'master' or 'owner' of supernatural potency. They are the healers and trance performers who enter altered states of consciousness and 'pull' sickness out of the people gathered at

[13] This is a modern spelling. I retain older spellings in quotations.

the dance.

While San owners-of-potency are not strictly gendered (indeed, to declare so would go against the possibilities allowed for in ritual contexts and negate the specificities of several San ethnographies [Biesele 1993: 74–75]), it is necessary to acknowledge that most of the owners-of-potency encountered by anthropologists who visited San groups in the Kalahari were men, and fewer were women (Lee 1967: 36; Katz 1973: 139, for an assessment of gendered roles as they relate to San shamanism and rock art, see Stevenson 1995, 2000). In more recent times, trance dances specifically for women have emerged (e.g., Lee 1968: 36; Katz 1982a: 50; Lee 2003: 135–137). At such dances, women constitute both the principle participants and performers with a male drummer (Katz 1982a: 50).

San owners-of-potency have also been called ‘shamans’ (e.g., Lewis-Williams 1984: 58, 1995: 144; Yates & Manhire 1991:8; Guenther 1999: 7; Hewitt [1986] 2008: 213; cf. Solomon 1999), for three main reasons: (1) there is no one word common to all San languages for owners-of-potency, (2) people often find the names in San languages, and especially the clicks, difficult to pronounce, and (3) ‘shaman’ places the San functionary in an international category of ritual specialists who visit other spiritual realms to achieve tasks on behalf of the community (e.g., Lewis-Williams 2006). Various other translations have been given for ‘owners-of-potency’, including but not limited to ‘sorcerers’ (Bleek & Lloyd 1911: 113), ‘magicians’ (Schapera 1930: 195), ‘medicine men’ (D. Bleek 1928: 28; Marshall 1957: 237), and ‘trance performers’ (Barnard 1992: 58), all of which have limitations and are inappropriate in one way or another. In this dissertation, because the focus is local and small-scale, I restrict my usage to expressions of the category in San terms, or using literal translations of these such as ‘owners-of-potency’ and seek to avoid terminological abstractions and generalisations.

Gaining experience with supernatural potency, and thus learning how to perform healing, is a long process (Katz 1973, 1982a: 117–140) but familiarity begins from birth. Babies, sometimes strapped to the back of a dancing mother, do not cry at the dances (Marshall 1969: 361, 372; Biesele 1993: 75). Young children

grow up around trance dances and do not find any of the proceedings fearful. When playing, they imitate these activities, even the harrowing 'death' and cries of comatose owners-of-potency (Marshall 1969: photograph 13, 372; Katz 1973: 142).

Owners-of-potency 'pull' sickness during a trance dance, where their presence, the central dance fire, and the *n|om* songs sung by a group of clapping women result in one of the greatest possible concentrations of *n|om* (Marshall 1969: 352–353; Katz 1982a: 94). Katz (1982a: 53) suggests that sickness is differentiated from symptomatic disease or illness by context. Illness is more likely, but not necessarily, to be addressed with a special curing ceremony or, in more recent times, with Western medicine (Marshall 1969: 354–355; Lee 2003: 137–140).

Holding a performance depends on what people consider worth singing and dancing for and whether it is possible to do so (Katz 1982a: 36–37). Several factors create conditions favourable for the dance; for some, it is enough just to want to dance (Katz 1982a: 36). At other times, the reason is more specific, such as the presence of large game meat after a successful hunt, a sudden and severe illness, or the arrival of visitors, be they friends or relatives (Lee 1967: 33; Marshall 1969: 353–356; Katz 1982a: 36). A dance is a cause for celebration and a way to relieve significant social tensions (Katz 1982a: 34–35).

While no two performances of the trance dance are entirely alike, trance dances share some general features in the way they start, progress, and end. Though there is no linear progression, no one way for the thing to happen, a communal trance dance *characteristically* progresses through phases of intensity and phases of low activity (Lee 1967: 31–33; Marshall 1969: 362; Katz 1982a: 40–41). A dance comes into being when enough people decide, somewhat spontaneously (Marshall 1969: 354), that they are happy to hold a dance. Great excitement usually accompanies a dance, but people do not always want to hold a dance and sometimes to convince others to join in takes some considerable encouragement from more enthusiastic people (Marshall 1969: 356). Crucially, without *a communal effort*, there would be too few people to light the fires, sing and clap, and too few to dance and heal.

Holding a dance is an occasion of genuine excitement: "[b]eing at a dance," say the Ju|'hoansi, "makes our hearts happy" (Katz 1982a: 34; Katz *et al*. 1997). Most dances typically begin after dark when people have eaten and when some women light the central dance fire (Marshall 1969: 349, 360–361). A group of women sits close together encircled around the fire and claps while singing (Lee 1967: 31; Marshall 1969: 356; Katz 1982a: 40). Like the central dance fire, the songs sung by the group of women have *n|om* (Marshall 1969: 354 footnote 1, 366, 368–369; Katz 1982a: 121–122) and give *n|om* to the dance (Katz 1982a: 126). Everyone knows how to sing these songs (including young boys and old men) and they sing them both during and outside of the trance dance (Marshall 1969: 368). It is the role of the women, those who come to sit around the central fire, to sing and clap for the dancers, assisting the dancers' *n|om* to boil so that they may enter a trance state and, at the height of their activated supernatural potency, 'pull' sickness out of those at the dance (Marshall 1969: 356; Katz 1982a: 46). The central fire may affect the shape of the line of dancers such that the circular dance rut (*n≠ebe* in Ju|'hoan) may become a figure of eight (Marshall 1969: 356–357, 362–363).

Dances that begin at night typically last into the daylight hours of the following morning (Lee 1967: 31, 32), although some do occur during the day (Marshall 1969: 360). Extremely long dances, of more than one night and a morning, are not unprecedented (Lee 1967: 32; Katz 1982a: 38). More and more people will join, and as more people show up for the dance, peripheral fires are lit (Marshall 1969: 357; Katz 1982a: 40). Around these 'talking fires' (Katz 1982a: 40) are people who do not dance or sing but who will receive healing at the dance. At the fires, "conversations range from comments on the singing and dancing, to discussions of food and tobacco, to everyday gossip" (Wiessner & Larson 1979: 26). When the dancers and singers get tired, they might retire to one of these fires and rest (Lee 1967: 31; Marshall 1969: 357; Katz 1982a: 40).

The build-up to trance is increasingly painful, terrifying, and potentially dangerous (Katz 1982a: 41, 44–45, 47–49). The first people to begin dancing are therefore not the most experienced: young boys may, for example, dance a few turns together in the dance rut, and then be followed by young men who, in Katz's

words, ‘play with *!aia*’, practice their dance moves, and show off (Katz 1973: 142, see also Lee 1967: 33; Marshall 1969: 361; Katz 1982a: 61). As such, not all the dancers in the dancing line are learning to ‘own’ *n|om* (Katz 1982a: 66): while some dance to learn, others are experienced owners-of-potency, and yet others dance just because they want to.

The Ju|’hoansi explain the trance state (*!aia*) as the result of *n|om* boiling in the stomach and rising up the spine (Marshall 1969: 352; Katz 1982a: 41, 42). Entry into *!aia* results in the healer’s spirit leaving through the top of the head which goes to confront or meet with the Greater or Lesser god and the spirits-of-the-dead (Marshall 1969: 377–378, see also Figure 5.28). *N|om* is heated principally by dancing with added heat from the central fire and the songs. It is only via the awakening *and* heating of *n|om* to a ‘boiling’ point that a person can *!aia* (Marshall 1969: 352). While the men (and fewer women) dance, the women who sit around the central dance fire sing and clap, and they are sometimes engaged in interactive dialogue with the dancers who *depend* on those women to reach *!aia* (Heinz 1975; Wiessner & Larson 1979; Katz 1982a: 65). In this role, the women are most serious: *!aia* is a “death thing” and “a fight” (Marshall 1969: 351–352, 372). Among the Ju|’hoansi are beliefs in exceptionally powerful and dangerous healers from long ago who could turn themselves into lions (Lee 1968: 46; Katz: 1982a 100–101). Such human-animal transformations are also attested to in the beliefs of the 19th century |Xam (e.g., Bleek & Lloyd 1911: 187). These concepts of transformation are expressed in San rock art through therianthropic (part-human, part-animal) images (e.g., Lewis-Williams 1981a; Jolly 2002), and through certain images, such as those of lions, which are acknowledged to depict owners-of-potency going about in leonine form (e.g., Lewis-Williams & Challis: 5-8).

Some dancers reach the *!aia* state more quickly than others (Lee 1967: 31; Marshall 1969: 374–376). In *!aia*, owners-of-potency go out of the dance circle and ‘pull’ the sickness placed into people by the spirits-of-the-dead, the ||*gauwa-si*

(Lee 1967: 32; Marshall 1969: 349; Katz 1982a: 40–41)[14]. They go out among the people seated at the peripheral fires and place their hands on their bodies (Lee 1967: 32; Marshall 1969: 349; Katz 1982a: 40–41). They 'pull' the sickness out of people with the 'laying on of hands', drawing it into themselves and then expelling it through the back of the neck so that it is returned to the ǁ*gauwa-si* from whence it came (Marshall 1969: 370, see also Figure 5.28). The pulling out of sickness is marked by the painful cries of the owners-of-potency who make the distinctive and harrowing *n*ǁ*hara* or *kowhedili* sounds, the cries of pain that are expressed by healers when they remove sickness (Marshall 1969: 370; Katz 1982a: 40).

Everyone receives this treatment, sometimes from multiple dancers (Lee 1967: 36; Marshall 1969: 349; Katz 1982a: 34). A dancer may heal just a few people, drawing out the 'arrows of sickness', and then return to dance, or he (or she) may lie down and rest, or may remain comatose for a long time, or alternate between all these phases (Marshall 1969: 374–379). Lee (1967: 32) suggests that periodically returning to the dance prolongs the trance state and delays the return to a normal conscious state.

I come now to an important point as far as performance is concerned: people are not the only beings present at a dance. The spirits-of-the-dead, or ǁ*gauwa-si*, enjoy the festivities of the dance just as much as the living (Marshall 1969: 350). It is therefore interesting to note that the lowermost depiction of a spirit-of-the-dead left of centre in Figure 1.1, distinguishable by its tusks and claws (Figure 5.29A), has its arms and hands in the correct position to be clapping and may thus be benevolently participating (in a supporting role) in the dance. Though the presence of spirits-of-the-dead is sometimes benevolent, it is often malevolent because spirits-of-the-dead are a 'vehicle' for sickness:

> They may at any given time be present only for pleasure, but they may on the other hand be there because ≠Gao N!a [the Greater

[14] Among the G|wi, the removal of sickness and the taking on of 'evil' forces occurs before owners-of-potency enter a trance. G|wi owners-of-potency thus enter trances states as a result of the curing process rather than to initiate it (Silberbauer 1965: 97).

> god] has sent them with sickness and death, under strict orders to inflict them on someone, no one knows whom. To combat ||Gauwa [the Lesser god] and the ||gauwa-si, and to drive them away with the sickness and death they may be bringing, is as much a part of the medicine man's function as is the drawing-out of sickness from someone who is already sick (Marshall 1969: 350).

Only experienced owners-of-potency in *!aia* can see the spirits that congregate at the edge of the dance (Lee 1968: 45, 2003: 131; Marshall 1999: 88), though everyone knows they are there. To protect the people from sickness and death, the owners-of-potency fend off the spirits-of-the-dead who long for the living to join them (Lee 2003: 130). The owners-of-potency engage with the spirits, strategically pleading with them or hurling aggressive insults (Lee 1968: 45; Marshall 1969: 350, 376; Wiessner & Larson 1979: 25), sometimes running into the darkness to confront and chase-off the spirits (e.g., Marshall 1969: 350, 376).

Sustained by the participants' singing and clapping, the owners-of-potency may 'pull' sickness through the night and into the next day. In *!aia*, owners-of-potency will sing and sometimes narrate what is happening to them (Wiessner & Larson 1979: 25), but "[t]here is great variation in what different dancers sing during trance" (Wiessner & Larson 1979: 30). None will remain in trance for the whole night, and the extreme length of some dances is only possible because people take turns to stop and rest (Lee 1967: 32). Not all the most experienced dancers dance at the same time because *!aia* is considered to be a dangerous state and those who enter it must be looked after by owners-of-potency or by other attendees at the dance (Katz 1982a: 48–49, 66).

When the sun comes up, a communal trance dance will typically enter a particularly enthusiastic phase of renewed energy (Lee 1967: 32; Marshall 1969: 362). Dances end gradually, with the heat of a warming day or the exhaustion of participants (e.g., Katz 1982a: 41). Healed by the owners-of-potency, and having spent a full night of intimate social activity together, the people at the dance pick up their things and disperse, going about their daily affairs (e.g., Wiessner & Larson 1979: 31; Katz 1982a: 41).

3.3: Interactions during a trance dance

At communal trance dances, owners-of-potency mediate between the world of the living and the world of the spirits by healing the community through their activation and control of their *n|om* and their engagement with the spirits-of-the-dead. As with the Kaluli séance, success in healing is not guaranteed because it is not directly equivalent to the physical health of the 'patients': it depends mainly on strategic adaptations during the performance and specific interactions with the participants. Nevertheless, because the performance is contingent on a communal effort, the risks of the performance failing are, overall, minimal.

A general summary of trance performance is not—from a performance point of view—as informative as an in-depth look at specific interactions. When giving a general overview, one is forced to say that, for instance, *sometimes* the San trance dance starts during the day and *sometimes* the dance happens because there is much meat at the camp. We are forced to ignore the connections between the different stages of a single performance. Nevertheless, what the dance 'does' for those who practise it is clear from the general summary above: "the !Kung Bushman trance performance can be regarded as a drama in which the stresses and tensions of social life are transformed into a common struggle against the external sources of malevolence" (Lee 1967: 37).

In Chapter 1, we saw how Schieffelin's (1985, 1996, 1998) work on Kaluli séances opened up three avenues for the study of San performances: (1) spirits can be participants and performers, (2) a social performance need not have only active performer and passive audience, and (3) performativity can be a dominant component of some performances. I discuss these avenues collectively below. It is important to keep in mind that the San trance dance, unlike the Kaluli séance familiar to Schieffelin, involves the intentional seeking of altered states of consciousness by certain individuals, as well as by collections of individuals who might 'see' each other on their journeys to and from the spirit world (Katz *et al.* 1997: 113). As such, an owner-of-potency may not necessarily have full conscious control of his or her behaviour at all times (e.g., Marshall 1969: 376). Nevertheless, his or her actions, even when extreme, are culturally contextualised,

performed and understood (Lee 1968: 36). Some select specific interactions between the trance dance performer and others present at the dance (be they participants, observers, performers, or spirits-of-the-dead) are worth further discussion.

3.3.1: The dancers and the women who clap and sing

As we have seen, it is the role of some of the women, those who come to sit around the central dance fire, to sing and clap so that the owners-of-potency may heat their *n|om* (Marshall 1969: 349). During a dance, there is a dialogic exchange between the trance dancers and the women who clap and sing: the dancers may ask, perhaps teasing or directly, for those women to sing louder (Katz 1982a: 58–79). The women who clap and sing are not a passive audience, or mere observers like those at the talking fires, and a dancer may engage with them when he feels alone and fearful of death because he feels that he does not have their support in his seeking of *!aia* (Wiessner & Larson 1979: 28; Katz 1982a: 58–79). In response, they are proud to sing and clap for the dancers and to support those going into *!aia* (Marshall 1969: 378; Katz 1973: 146, 1982a: 58–79). Lee (1967: 31, 1968: 37), Marshall (1969: 346, 364–365), and Katz (1982a: 5, 34, 40), among others, note that some women also frequently get up and dance for a while before sitting down again to resume the task of providing the song and rhythm. Today, in the Kalahari, women are thus often among the dancers going into trance.

Interaction between clapping figures (for it is not unambiguously clear that they are all women) and a lone trance dancer is depicted in the scene from MEL6 (Figure 1.1). The painted group clearly illustrates the point that the interaction between supporting participants and dancers is not a one-way exchange but one that is mutually and communally beneficial. In this way, although the group of singing and clapping women do not themselves perform healing, their role is one that is intimately associated with the performers who do heal.

3.3.2: Dancers, participants, and the dance fire

Another interaction occurs when some dancers “go to the fire, walk in it, put their

heads in it, pick up coals and rub them over their hands and body" (Katz 1982a: 121). They engage with the fire to assist their *n|om* to boil. Although some of the participants at the dance, chiefly the group of women who clap and sing, may also help the dancers to heat their *n|om* by rubbing the bodies of the owners-of-potency in *!aia* with their hands after handling hot coals (Katz 1982a: 121), they also assist to prevent those in trance from hurting themselves in the fire (Marshall 1969: 377). They often need to assist when dancers seeking trance dive into the fire and set their hair alight. The following was observed by Polly Wiessner and Flemming Larsson (1979: 30):

> |Gau's arm is getting burned and Kxrao says to him: "Why don't you take your arm out of the fire?" In the trance dance, somebody usually sees that the person in trance does not hurt himself, but this is done very casually so as not alarm the trancer. For instance, earlier when one man picked up fire [sic] threw it in the air, keeping one flaming stick, a [woman] quietly took it from him and lit her pipe as if he had offered it to her. It is absolutely necessary that other participants restrain a person in trance when he wants to come close to the fire, walk through it, put his forehead in it, throw coals, etc.

Dancers engage with the fire and coals differently depending on their level of experience. While there may be an entirely justifiable neuropsychological reason for diving into a fire while experiencing an altered state of consciousness (e.g., Lee 1968: 43), some dancers report that they do not get burnt because *n|om* protects them from the heat of the fire (e.g., Katz 1982a: 100, 122). Marshall, who reports that she herself treated several owners-of-potency for burns obtained during trance performance, notes that there is at least sometimes an observable contradiction between what healers claim and what actually happens (Marshall 1969: 358; cf. Silberbauer 1981: 176).

Despite the severe danger that the fire presents, it is important to consider that at least some healers, both experienced and those still learning, may use the fire in a performative, expressive way as an important component of their performance of healing and achieving *!aia*. Young dancers who cannot yet fully control their *n|om* typically interact with the fire far more dangerously and wildly than

experienced owners-of-potency (Katz 1982a: 121–122).That burns obtained during trance is a demonstrable physical contradiction of the claims of some owners-of-potency allows for the possibility that dancers may dive into the fire because powerful owners-of-potency can do so, and it is important, both to the healer and to those observing, *to be seen to have control over n|om*.

3.3.3: N|om seekers and masters

A further interaction in the performance of a trance dance occurs between 'novices' and 'masters' of *n|om.* Boys are especially encouraged to become owners-of-potency: to be one is to the benefit of the entire community (Lee 1968: 47, 2003: 133, 135). Lee (1968: 46–48; see also Katz 1973, 1982a) highlights that apprenticeship is itself an important component of the dance. Young people need to learn from older people who know what they are doing. Determined young men yet to *!aia*—Katz's '*n|om* seekers'—typically learn about *n|om* experientially by deliberately 'apprenticing' themselves to 'masters of *n|om'* (Lee 1968: 46–48, 2003: 133–135; Katz 1973: 142). Here, the *n|om* master cares for the young novice and guides the novice through the process of gaining experience with *n|om*, and when the young novice begins to trance, the master supports and looks after the novice just as he would for a fellow owner-of-potency.

The older and more experienced teachers of the *n|om* seekers put ('shoot', as they say) *n|om* into the *n|om* seeker so that they will *!aia* (Silberbauer 1965: 99; Katz 1973: 144–146). Not all *n|om* seekers have the courage required to push through the fear and pain of boiling *n|om* to enter *!aia* (Katz 1973: 145; Lee 2003: 33–135). The teachers, as well as the participating women, work with the novice and provide support through the build-up to *!aia*, and look after him (or her) once he enters the trance state by guiding him to those who need healing as well as protecting him from the heat of the fire (Katz 1973: 144–146). People may be critical if the 'masters' *fail* to protect a novice adequately from danger (Lee 1968: 47). Importantly, and in line with the San themes of tradition and idiosyncrasy identified beforehand, not all *n|omkxaosi* 'learn' *n|om* in the same way: "[u]nlike many !Kung who get their medicine gradually, through years of training with

older n|um masters, ≠Toma received his directly from 'God'" (Wiessner & Larson 1979: 25).

3.3.4: Masters and other masters

The curing of owners-of-potency in *!aia* by fellow owners-of-potency constitutes another interactive component of trance performance. Healing as the owners-of-potency do is perceived as dangerous and potentially fatal; the *!aia* state is likened, through differentiated from, physical death by those who practice it (Lee 1967: 31; Marshall 1969: 377–378; Heinz 1975; Katz 1982a: 99). When a person lies comatose in *!aia*, other owners-of-potency, or some of the participating women, work on the body with massage and heat (Lee 1967: 31–32; Marshall 1969: 377–379; Katz 1982a: 100). "When healers are protecting other healers in trance, they give great importance to sweat and fervently rub each other" (Marshall 1999: 60). If not managed properly, the San believe that the spirit of the comatose owner-of-potency could be taken by the malevolent ||*gauwa-si* and leave the world of the living and so *actually* die (Marshall 1969: 378; Katz 1982a: 100). Katz (1982a: 99) does not acknowledge the category of 'half-death' as reported by Lee (1967: 31) and Marshall (1969: 377) but includes comment from one of his informants which indicates that owners-of-potency are considered dead when in *!aia* (Katz 1982a: 87).

As we can expect given the performance context, and as was introduced in the discussion of the innovativeness and creativeness of the San performer in the previous chapter (Guenther 1999: 135), experienced owners-of-potency do not all cure, dance, sing or enter trance in the same way:

> although n|um masters participate together in a dance with the help of the entire community and not in competition with one another, *each takes pride in his ability to heal and enjoys expressing himself and entertaining others by his individualized style of singing and dancing* (Wiessner & Larson 1979: 30, emphasis added).

This quotation is yet a further example of the themes of tradition and idiosyncrasy

in San expressive culture. It encapsulates the importance of performativity: the way that dancers go into trance and heal affects how each performance progresses and how the performers are perceived by the attendant observers and other performers. Each healer may have a different way of going about what he or she does. In some cases, this gives rise to criticism and suspicion. The risk factor is, therefore, never absent.

Two contrasting examples of different ways of performing at a communal dance are illustrative. The first idiosyncratic case does not, at least as reported in the literature, present a challenge to other owners-of-potency. It is a statement from an anonymous Ju|'hoan owner-of-potency interviewed by Katz (1973: 141). The account is idiosyncratic because, unlike the majority of other owners-of-potency, the man is blind. Nevertheless, he was one of the most powerful healers recognised in the region at the time. His explanation of trance experience is coherent within the tradition of *!aia* healing:

> God keeps my eyeballs in a little cloth bag. When he first collected them, he got a little cloth bag and plucked my eyeballs out and put them into the bag and then he tied the eyeballs to his belt and went up to heaven. And now when I dance, on the nights when I dance and the singing rises up, he comes down from heaven swinging the bag with the eyeballs above my head and then he lowers the eyeballs to my eye level, and as the singing gets strong, he puts the eyeballs into my sockets and they stay there and I cure. And then when the women stop singing and separate out, he removes the eyeballs, puts them back in the cloth bag and takes them up to heaven (Katz 1973: 141)[15].

In line with the insights of performance studies, Wiessner and Larsson note that "[i]t is not unusual among the !Kung for different informants to hold quite varied beliefs" (1979: 26). Those beliefs arise from differences in the individual experience and construal of the events of the dance, both during and outside of the communal performance context.

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[15] It is interesting to note here the parallel between a blind man 'getting eyeballs' during the performance of a trance dance and the neuropsychological generation of imagery in altered states of consciousness (see Chapter 4).

A second example contrasts with the socially unchallenged first example. In the second case, two subtly competitive performers give different performances and one of the healers is unhappy with the way that the other has performed. In that sense, one of them has failed, but in another sense he has succeeded in fulfilling his role as a powerful owner-of-potency. The differences between how the two owners-of-potency perform and what they believe about healing are lucid.

After a trance dance, Katz interviewed two owners-of-potency with reputations as 'big', powerful healers (Katz 1982a: 58–91). One, Kinachau, healed conventionally: dancing, entering trance, and going around to those seated at the dance to heal. The other, Toma Zho, Kinachau's nephew, was ambitious: he wanted, in the grander scheme of things, to become itinerant.

> Toma Zho is now [i.e. currently] more of a traditional healer, oriented toward healing in his own camp. He *wants* to be more of a professional healer, oriented toward healing persons in the general Dobe area, Kung and non-Kung alike, and receiving payment for his cures, especially from non-Kung (Katz 1982a: 59, emphasis added).

He was supported at dances by the voices of his two wives and his sister—an unusual amount of support for one healer. At this particular dance, Toma Zho participated minimally during the early phases of the dance through short spurts of dancing and looking after other owners-of-potency, in particular, a younger, less experienced healer. The way in which Toma Zho delayed his earnest dancing and trance state moved Katz to say that, after nearly five hours at the dance, Toma Zho had "not yet danced seriously" (Katz 1982a: 72).

Toma Zho waited until the early sunrise-hours of the next morning, when the dance picked up in spirit[16] and was nearly over, to begin dancing seriously. This action did two things. First, it strategically demonstrated his capacity as a powerful owner-of-potency to those at the dance—not least because he danced at

[16] Sunrise appears to be an especially powerful time for trance dance performances. Marshall notes that, "[a]lways at dawn comes a high moment, and sunrise is often the highest of all. As the sun rises, the people sing the Sun song. *They feel that the n/um is very strong then*" (1969: 362, emphasis added, see also Katz 1982a: 76).

an especially powerful period of the performance. Indeed, he dominated the performance of the dance from sunrise until the end of the dance (Katz 1982a: 76–79). Had he not attempted to enter *!aia*, people would have criticised him and talked negatively of selfishness, which would have affected his intentions to become a 'professional' healer. Second, it gave rise to complaints. Some of the singing women were from Toma Zho's camp, but the other women were tired and wanted to stop because Toma Zho would take hours to exit *!aia*. After he entered *!aia*, the break of the new day meant that these same women had to decide whether the dance would continue or not. They said that:

> Toma Zho is only in the early stages of kia, that it will be well into the day before he is through. They feel it will be too difficult to provide food and water for those at the dance who get hungry and thirsty. This larger group also says that, as the day comes on, the heat will be too much, even if the dance moves into the shade of one of the large trees. They carry the decision (Katz 1982a: 78).

In response:

> Toma Zho turns to the women who have been singing all night and says, "That's it for the day." *His tone is one of resignation*. Toma Zho remains at a high level of excitement as he goes on talking with others at the dance. Still wiping the sweat from his eyes and mouth, his gestures and conversation are animated, though he is in control of his body and his conversation is lucid (Katz 1982a: 78, emphasis added).

Kinachau, however, disapproved of Toma Zho's actions. Knowing that he would not be paid for his services and to maintain his reputation as a "big" (Katz 1982a: 59), especially powerful healer, Toma Zho chose to enter *!aia* at a very late stage in the dance. However, because the dance ended before he came out of trance, that is, improperly, Toma Zho was, to Kinachau, a dead man walking:

> Toma Zho was going to pull people," says Kinachau, "but perhaps he got –" Kinachau breaks off in mid-sentence and concludes: "Toma Zho failed in that and just quit. It's bad that he entered kia and then was just dead, dead, dead, the death of kia, whereas

> others of us get up and go around and pull while we are experiencing kia (Katz 1982a: 87).

It is here clear that Toma Zho did not want to dance because his own agenda was not served on this occasion: no one would treat him as a professional healer and reward him with any payment for his healing services. Nevertheless, his reputation was at stake and he did the minimum without upsetting too many people. Whatever he does, other people at the dance watch the healer. *It is, however, a great risk for the healer to act in ways that differ too noticeably from established tradition*.

3.3.5: Dancers and spirits-of-the-dead

Another interaction visible at the dance occurs between the trance dancers and the spirits-of-the-dead. It constitutes an overlap in ontological spheres where the reason for the dance, the removal of sickness, comes into contact with the cause of sickness, the spirits-of-the-dead. "Although ideas of exactly how sickness is caused and healed do vary from person to person, the idea of [transcendence] and argument with supernatural beings is central to !Kung trance healing" (Wiessner & Larson 1979: 25). Through the lens of performance theory, we see that the interactions between owners-of-potency and the spirits are contingent on what is happening during that part of the dance *because the spirits, while present, are invisible to other people* and can be seen by the only owners-of-potency (Lee 1968: 45).

In Figure 1.1, several images of spirits-of-the-dead have been painted. They are distinguishable from the other people at the dance by their grotesque claws and tusks, and emaciated arms and legs (see Chapter 5). However, they lack other features that one might normally associate with spirits-of-the-dead such as emaciated wrists and rib cages, and protruding hips (e.g., Blundell 2004: 99). It is possible to interpret these images as spirits-of-the-dead because the shades are attracted to the dance and the owners-of-potency verbally engage with them (Lee 1968: 45; Marshall 1969: 350, 376; Wiessner & Larson 1979: 25). It is by seeing and hearing the actions of the healers that those gathered at the dance—the

observers and other participants—know what is happening to the healers:

> *When they are in trance* the medicine men reverse their ordinary behaviour: instead of being cautious and discreet with respect to the gods and the spirits of the dead, they become bold and call out to them. Sometimes they plead with them for help, or plead with them to take pity and go away with the sickness and death they are bringing… *Exhibiting aggressiveness and violence that they do not show in daily life*, they rush into the shadows, hurl sticks, shriek and curse and yell at the death-bringers to go away and take with them the evils they have brought. Thus they protect the people (Marshall 1969: 350, emphasis added).

It is important for the healers to be seen to engage with the spirits-of-the-dead in these ways. The owners-of-potency thus *perform* their engagement with the spirits-of-the-dead so that other people at the dance, the witnesses, will understand what is happening because the spirits-of-the-dead, though present, are silent *participants* in trance dance performances. Without the performance of the owners-of-potency, the presence of the spirits-of-the-dead would go unnoticed.

In sum, there are a number of interactions that occur at the dance. There are so many different interactions, on which the process of the performance is itself contingent, that the performance is more complex than other San performances and, arguably, than the Kaluli séance. Since the dance is highly communal and highly interactive, it is more than the sum of its parts and is what Schieffelin has termed *an emergent social construction* (Schieffelin 1985: 721–722). With these interactions in mind—each of which is a locus for the maintenance of traditional ways of doing things or one for the introduction of change (Schieffelin 1998: 199)—I turn to the issue of the performers themselves and what it is that they *display* in the performance of communal healing.

3.4: Special curing ceremonies

We have already noted that the trance dance is a highly communal and interactive performance. The owners-of-potency are indeed the performers in this case but it is somewhat inadequate to state simply that they are performing healing. An instructive comparative context for the trance dance is what Marshall, who

worked with several Ju|'hoansi bands, termed a 'special curing' ceremony (Marshall 1969: 354). A special curing is not communal (in the sense of involving the entire community) and is held for someone who is 'actually sick' or ill (Marshall 1969: 369) rather than to draw out the sickness of the ||*gauwa-si*, though illness is not necessarily an immediate cause for a special curing and may be treated in the context of the communal dance (Marshall 1969: 354; Wiessner & Larson 1979: 25).

In addition to the absence of a community gathering, a special curing ceremony typically involves no dancing (Marshall 1969: 354, 371). Nevertheless, Marshall (1969: 371) notes several supplementary practices that are present during special curings that are otherwise absent at communal dances, including diligent massage, smouldering medicine plants, and the transmission of *n|om* to the person being cured:

> n|um helps to dislodge the sickness and makes it easier to remove. In setting fire to their hair the healers exude n|um. The n|um comes out in the smell of the burning hair and is breathed in by the patient… A healer takes sweat on his hands from the sweaty places of his body—his face, chest, abdomen, backs of knees, and especially his armpits—and rubs it on the patient… The smoke, the sweat, the massage are all *supplementary elements to the power inherent in the healers' n|um* (Marshall 1999: 60, emphasis added).

The practices that are performed during special curing ceremonies aid the owner-of-potency in his or her practice of healing, but they rely on his or her supernatural potency. It is, therefore, interesting to note that while healing at communal dances is *usually* accompanied by trance states, at special curings, the situation is different:

> *healers may or may not go into trance. Trance is not essential to healings; it is not a power in itself and does not increase the healer's power.* It is believed to occur because the healer's n|um is so strong that it overcomes him. Trance is the result. The strength of the n|um is thus manifest…. At special curings the healers go into light trance if they trance at all (Marshall 1999: 61; emphasis added).

A healer performing a special curing ceremony nevertheless cries out the same painful sounds and shrieks (*n||hara* or kowhedili) associated with the removal of sickness at the communal dances. The excruciating sounds, in addition to the supplementary practices, evidence that the healer is indeed healing, just as he or she does at trance dances.

There is, however, a clear contradiction (not problematic to the San themselves) that arises between the performance of healing in communal and 'special' contexts: the dance that provides much of the means to enable healers to remove sickness through the heating and activation of *n|om* is, apparently, not required to remove sickness. Crucially, and as Marshall (1999: 61) points out, at both the communal dance and at special curings, it is an owner-of-potency's *experience with and his or her ability to control n|om*, rather than the trance state itself, that is important in the performance of healing.

3.5: From dancing to painting

The performance of healing among the San is exemplified by both the Ju|'hoansi communal trance dance and special curing ceremony. The composite outline of the communal trance dance presented in this chapter aimed to convey, firstly, just how many areas of individual expression there are at a dance and, secondly, how many social relations and interactions collectively contribute to the performance of the dance and constrain what can happen at the dance.

It stands as an example of the most detailed and complex form of San expressive culture. From birth to burial, the dance is an active part of San life and death. In this, the skills and experience of the owners-of-potency are acknowledged and respected on an individual level, yet the interactions at the dance reveal how communal and participatory the healing effort is. The multiple interactions at the dance allow the dance to 'operate' communally and be so effective on so many socially significant levels. Each set of interactions that takes place at the dance—not limited to those between the dancers and the participating women who clap and sing, between dancers the women and dance fire, between novices and masters, masters and masters, and between owners-of-potency and spirits-of-the-

dead—adds a layer of complexity to the performance. Indeed, the interactions construct the performance itself and participate in the social construction of reality because of how the interactions affect what people understand to have happened during the performance, sometimes with cosmological implications (Marshall 1969; Wiessner & Larson 1979).

There are no boundaries between sacred and profane at the communal trance dances and it is clear from the comparison of the communal dance with special curing ceremonies that owners-of-potency require not only an ability to activate *n|om* but experience with and an ability to control it. The community of the dance affects the success of the performance which depends in no small way on how the owners-of-potency go about their healing. The way in which healers 'carry' themselves is important for the success of the dance, as is the assistance that they receive from the other participants at the dance. Crucially, however, each dance is different from another because each dance plays out uniquely, sometimes like this, sometimes like that.

This chapter stands as an example of a San performance that can be used as a means to guide, comparatively, the reconstruction of other, extinct San performances, such as the making of the MR images. The reconstruction of image-making performances is one of the aims of this dissertation, but that is far easier said than done, not least because authentic image-making was never documented in that area. Nevertheless, several ethnohistorical sources do inform us about San image-making practice.

The existence of a trance dance among the southern San is at the heart of the most comprehensive and persuasive ethnographic interpretation of San rock paintings (Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2012a). Unequivocal parallels between rock paintings in southern Africa and the performances of the trance dance have been demonstrated based on shared content, both literal and figurative. The 'fit' between the content of San ethnography and the details of rock paintings in southern Africa is to such a high degree that ethnographies widely separated in time and space can explain, point by point, many features of the art (e.g., Lewis-Williams & Biesele 1978; Lewis-Williams 1980, 1981a, 1981b, 2015a: 57;

Deacon 1988; Dowson 1988, 1998; Yates & Manhire 1991; Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1999; Ouzman 2001; Hollmann 2002, 2005a, 2005b; Blundell 2004; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2004a, 2012b; Blundell 2004; Challis 2005; Rifkin 2009; Lewis-Williams & Challis 2011).

In contrast to the ethnography of healing practices among San groups, we have far fewer documentary sources that directly inform the practice of rock painting among the San. Nevertheless, we know enough about San imagery to attempt to go beyond the discussion of meaning to contextualise meaning relative to interactions. In the following chapter, I discuss a model for the making and viewing of San painted imagery which paved the way for a performance approach.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1: Behind the 'scenes'

Several aspects of the practice of San rock painting remain unexplored, under-theorised and unexplained. Despite all that we know *about* the paintings, many questions remain without definite answers, if we have asked them at all. Was the making of paintings communal? Was it ritualised? Were image-makers a category of 'owners-of-potency'? How did a person learn to paint? Did both men and women paint? As the performance context of the making of imagery was not directly observed, we cannot provide exact, accurately historicized answers to all of these questions. We can, nevertheless, make an informed attempt to limit the range of possibilities that, if left unconstrained, force us into the defeatist position that 'we will never know'.

Some 10 metres north of the paintings shown in Figure 1.1 is another painted rock shelter: MEL5 (see Figure C.5). Part of the shelter has images painted on the ceiling of the overhang. One of the images is strange in that it shows the body of a man (identifiable by his phallus) without a head and bending forward at the waist with a clear shift in weight from one leg to another (Figure 4.1). The man has vertical lines on his legs between the knee and foot. Five rhebok antelope surround him. To the far right of the man, one of the rhebok appears to have its legs spread out above its dorsal side as if 'flying' instead of perpendicular to and beneath its body like the others. Importantly, these images exist in relationships of overlap (Figure 4.2): the proper right (viewer's left) leg of the human figure overlies the back legs of a rhebok. The human figure is, in turn, overlain at the buttocks by the hindquarters of another rhebok. Though the images in Figure 4.1 are not particularly detailed, the colours are still vibrant and the images have preserved fairly well.

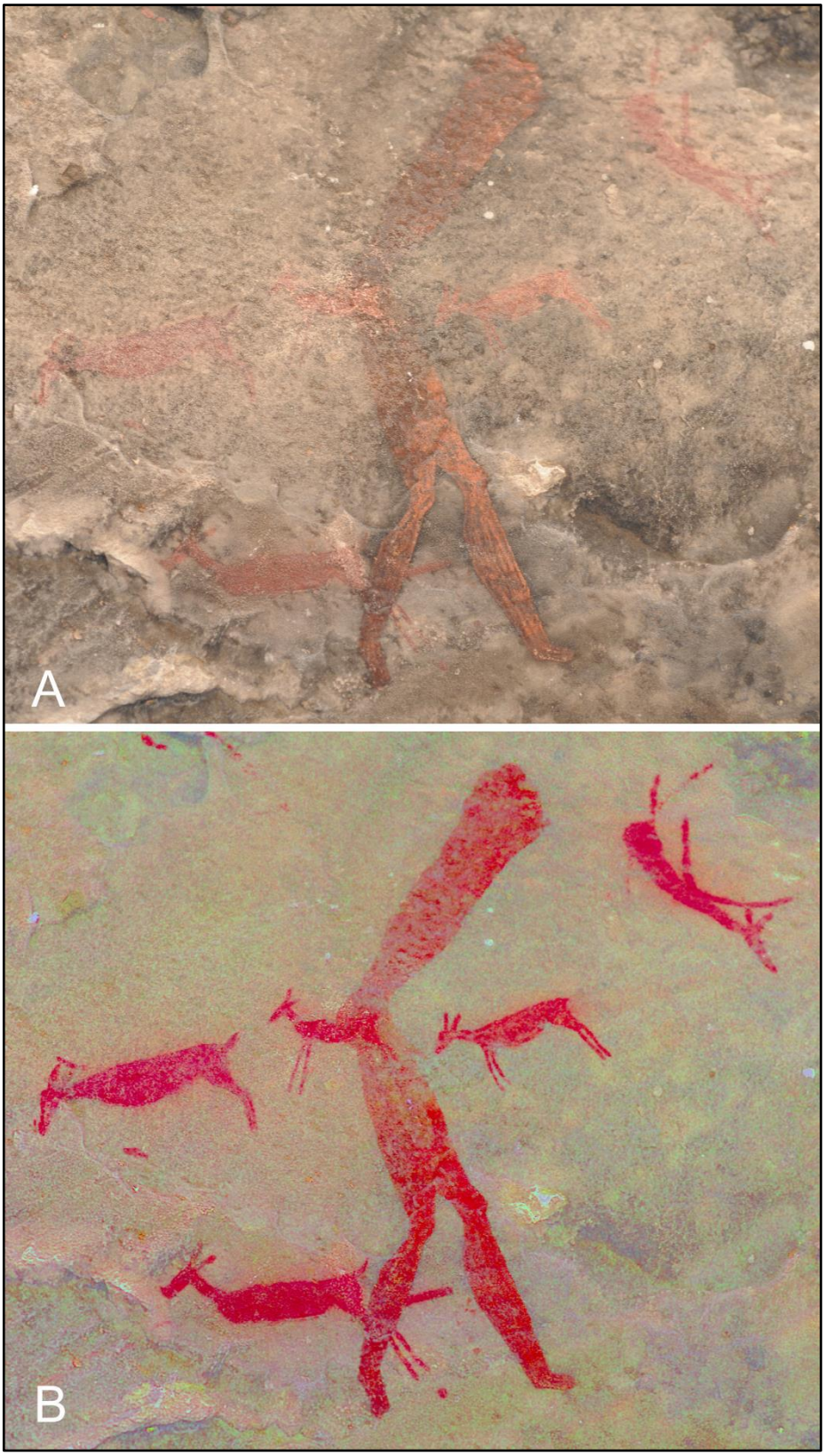


Figure 4.1. (A) Photograph of images on the roof at MEL5. Note the lines on the legs of the human figure and the 'flying' rhebok at the top right. (B) Digital enhancement (DStretch©, LRE) of image A.

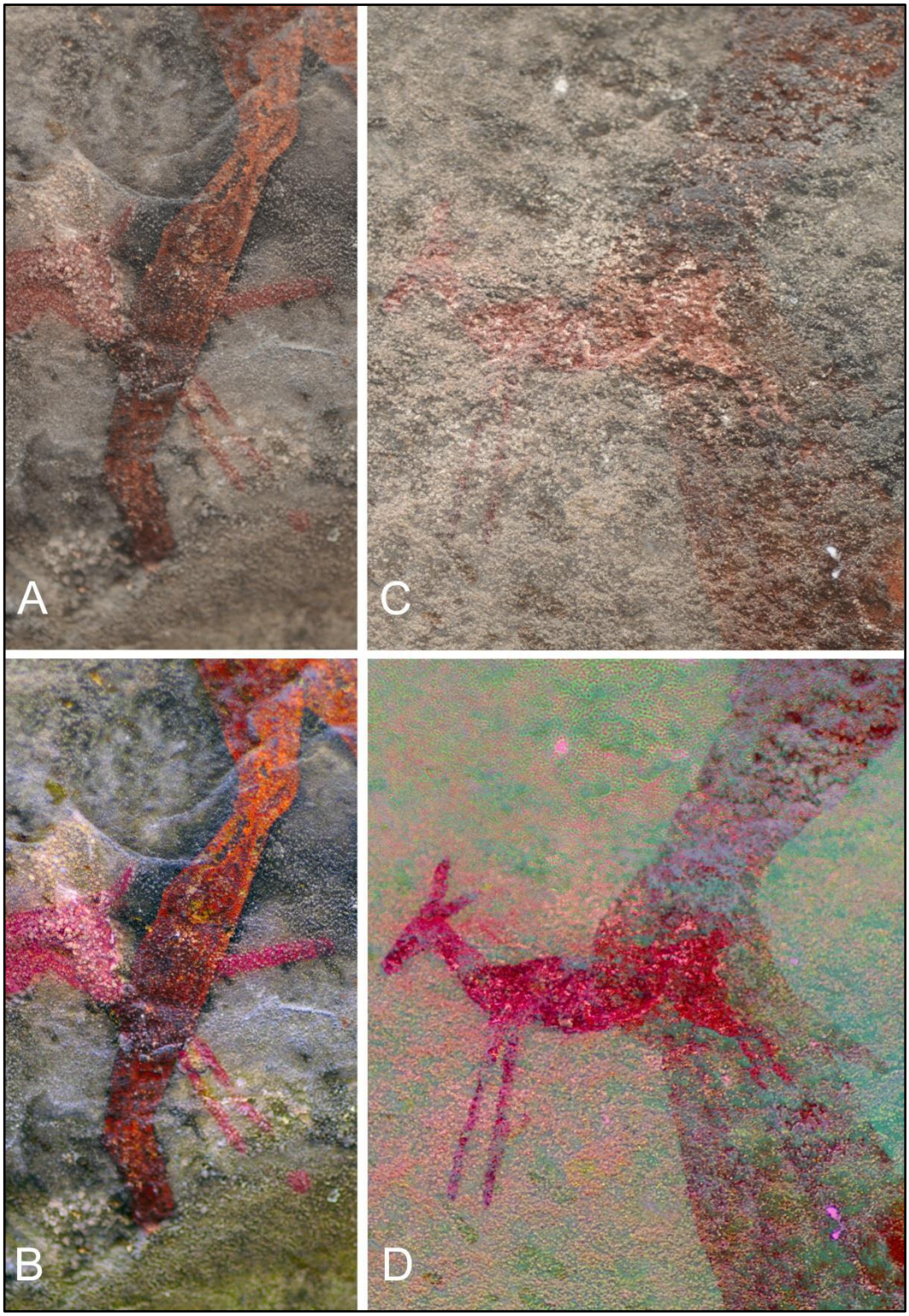


Figure 4.2: Relationships of overlap in Figure 4.1 from MEL5. (A) The proper right leg of the human figure overlies the hind legs of a rhebok. (B) DStretch© (LAB) enhancement of image A. (C) The hindquarters of another rhebok overlie the human figure's buttocks. Note the abrasion that almost obscures the rhebok. (D) DStretch© (CRGB) enhancement of image C. Note the phallus of the human figure.

Despite the relative lack of complexity and detail, "we have to see the few isolated images that we find in some sites… in light of what we know about the San and their images in general" (Lewis-Williams 2015b: 11).

The subject matter and meaning of many San rock paintings are, at least to some degree, explicable with reference to San ethnography and the exegesis of complex, and therefore more informative, rock paintings (e.g., Lewis-Williams 1981a; Deacon 1988; Dowson 1988, 1998; Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1999; Hollmann 2002, 2005a, 2005b; Blundell 2004; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2004a, 2009, 2012b; Lewis-Williams & Challis 2011; Challis 2005). There can be no doubt that aspects of Figure 4.1 are similarly explicable and I explore them later in this chapter in relation to the process of image-making, after first addressing other issues.

In addressing the performances associated with San image-making and -viewing on the MR, it is necessary to investigate the activities related to the painted image. What goes on 'behind the scenes' (to use a theatre metaphor) of the making of San imagery that can help us to understand both the making of the image and its use? Despite the presence of 'art' in 'rock art', there are few, if any, significant parallels between Western art and San image-making (e.g., Vinnicombe 1972a, 1972b; Lewis-Williams 1974: 102, 1984, 1988: 2). The Western artist is not equivalent to the 'San shaman-artist', and the terminology associated with Western art is similarly problematic: the categories of 'art', 'artist' and 'gallery' do not have direct and unproblematic equivalents in San expressive culture (e.g., Lewis-Williams 1982, 1994: 277, 1995: 148, 2001a: 17). As both Vinnicombe (1976) and Lewis-Williams (1981a) came to realise in their studies of San rock art, it is necessary to approach San painted imagery, and, for my purposes, the whole practice and any attendant performances, from a San perspective that derives from a reading of San ethnography. It is only by doing so that the qualities of that practice come to the fore.

4.2: The process behind image-making

The practice behind the making and viewing of San rock paintings was a process.

It is this process—not just the separate stages of it—that we should seek to understand. Lewis-Williams (1994, 1995, 2001a) argues that the social production and consumption of San imagery is fundamentally a process of four distinguishable and ritualised stages. At no point can one justifiably separate one part of the process from the rest. His model provides a foundation for the argument that the making, viewing and use of painted imagery are parts of a performative process. Although not invoking performance theory, as I do, Lewis-Williams draws an explicit parallel with performances when he explains the relationship between image-makers, images, and image-consumers using a theatre metaphor: "[r]itual, in this sense, was 'theatre': some of the 'props' were rock art images that proclaimed and, indeed, were palpable, tangible evidence for the shamans' access to spiritual realities" (Lewis-Williams 1994: 238).

Lewis-Williams's model (1994, 1995, 2001a), because of the various stages that it considers, is perhaps the most comprehensive and in-depth attempt so far to describe the broader practice of San rock painting with attention to the process of what came before the making of the image and what happened afterwards. It is, therefore, worth discussing in detail because, together with performance studies, it provides the framework for how I approach the MR images in this dissertation. In doing so, I see and apply the model in terms of performance theory.

4.3: The four stages

The four stages of Lewis-Williams's model are as follows: 1) the acquisition of imagery, 2) the manufacture of paint, 3) the making of rock paintings, and 4) the use of rock paintings (Lewis-Williams 1994, 1995, 2001a). Importantly, while the first two stages of the process are relatively well supported by documentary sources, the remaining two stages have less direct support from those records. Still, with the example of the communal healing dance as a performance in mind, it is possible to develop some existing ideas in terms of performance theory.

4.3.1: Acquisition of imagery

In the first stage, potential images are acquired from one of six interrelated

contexts: the trance dance, special curing ceremonies, the viewing of painted imagery, and dreams (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 26), and the visual experience of the real world. While all six of the contexts in which imagery is acquired are *understood* within the same cultural framework (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 28), it is useful to distinguish here between imagery generated through the experience of altered states of consciousness (ASC) and imagery that is produced from the viewing of rock paintings or the visual experience of the real, observable world.

In Chapter 3, I discussed the ethnographically attested and historically documented ways in which ASC where deliberately sought by San owners-of-potency in ritual contexts. In addition to the documentary sources, there is a wealth of independent neuropsychological and neuroscientific research that builds on what happens in the brain during ASC and hallucinations (e.g., Sacks 1970; Siegel & Jarvik 1975; Reichel-Dolmatoff 1978a, 1978b, 1990; Dobkin de Rios 1986) and how these hallucinations relate to painted imagery (e.g., Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1988; Froese 2017; Froese *et al*. 2013, 2014a, 2014b; Froese *et al*. 2016).

A model developed by Lewis-Williams and Dowson (1988) describes the neuropsychological generation of imagery in ASC in three stages. Crucially, because hallucinations are a function of the human nervous system, and because all people share the same wiring of the human brain, all people, bar damage to, or interference with, that system, have the same biological potential to experience ASC (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1988: 202). Lewis-Williams and Dowson (1988) provide support for the argument that *a significant proportion* of San painted imagery is the result of the cultural interpretation and elaboration of imagery experienced at different stages of hallucinations. Importantly, the value or emphasis that people place on a given stage is culturally controlled (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1988: 202).

Briefly, stage one is the visual experience of scintillating geometric forms generated between and within the brain and optical system. These are termed entoptic phenomena. The next stage is characterised by the construal of these visual hallucinations as iconic forms, which may take the form of familiar objects

or animals. The third stage is the deepest: all of a person's senses begin to hallucinate and he or she makes no distinction between what is outwardly real and what is hallucinated (e.g., Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1988: 204).

All three stages can potentially be experienced by trancing San owners-of-potency either at a communal dance or, far less frequently, at special curing ceremonies (see Chapter 3). That San owners-of-potency enter deep ASC, to the point of unconsciousness, and return from those states, goes some of the way to explaining why much of San imagery relates to themes of reality and non-reality (Lewis-Williams 1988).

The imagery that derives from the full range of trance states experienced at the communal healing dances is typically traditional and stands to be reinforced for everyone, not least because those who enter ASC are so familiar with the practice of trance that they *expect* certain kinds of hallucinatory experiences (Biesele 1993: 72; Lewis-Williams 2001a: 26). The visions at a communal dance are shared between owners-of-potency when a healer draws the attention of others to something so that they too will see it (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990: 14; see also Lewis-Williams *et al.* 2000: 130), as well as after the dance when the activities of the healers are discussed and recollected to everyone (Biesele 1993: 76–77; Lewis-Williams 2001a: 26).

The human brain can, nevertheless, produce novel or aberrant hallucinations (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 26). At an individual level, this allows for privileged idiosyncratic insights (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 27) because "[d]uring *!aia*, the reality of the unseen dominates" (Katz *et al*. 1997: 23–24). Importantly, people who are not owners-of-potency do not deliberately seek ASC: other members of the community do not have access to imagery generated from trance states. They are, however, able to participate in the reality of the spiritual realm through the actions and accounts of the owners-of potency, and their own dreams which can be brought to the attention of owners-of-potency for interpretation (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 28). A similar situation occurs when imagery is reinforced, stabilised and constrained through the viewing of rock paintings, a process which has a recursive relationship with hallucinatory visions (Lewis-Williams 2001a:

28).

It is essential to remember that not all imagery derives *directly* from hallucinations or visions:

> [m]uch other rock art is concerned with ways in which the spirit world interpenetrates the material world. Some paintings, such as those of shamanistic dances, combine observable reality (such as dancers wearing ankle rattles) and spiritual reality that was 'seen' by shamans only (such as expelled sickness, supernatural potency, physical transformations into part-animal, part-human therianthropes, and the 'threads of light' that lead to the spirit world); *these paintings present the privileged views of shamans* who can 'see' both their material surroundings and the presence of spiritual entities (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 29, emphasis added).

Though the imagery may not derive directly from an hallucination, most imagery *does* relate to the privileged knowledge of the owners-of-potency to which other people do not have access. The journeys of the owners-of-potency between the world of the living and the world of the spirits are consequently paralleled by the lack of the clear division between 'real' (i.e. observable reality) and 'non-real' (i.e. spiritual reality) imagery.

The images in Figure 4.1 illustrate these points. They exist in relationships of overlap (Figure 4.2): though they are unlikely to have been made during one event, they are nevertheless related. Details of the images themselves in relation to each other suggest that they are *all* likely to have been acquired during altered states of consciousness probably experienced during the performance of communal trance dances. The panel can be divided into three layers based both on colour and superpositioning:

1. Layer 1 comprises three rhebok antelope painted in red: the two rhebok on the far left of the Figure 4.1 and the 'flying' rhebok on the far right. All three are painted in a shade of red than is relatively less orange than the images in Layer 2 and Layer 3. All three rhebok in Layer 1 are relatively larger than the two central rhebok images in Layer 3. Furthermore, the front legs of the two

leftmost rhebok have faded away since they were painted, suggesting that these two images were painted with the same paints and at the same time. The hind legs of the lowermost rhebok image in Layer 1 are partially overlain by the human figure.

2. Layer 2 is the single human figure which is relatively more orange in colour than any of the five rhebok images. It is 'sandwiched' between the other layers with Layer 1 underneath and Layer 3 on top.
3. Layer 3 comprises the two rhebok in the centre of the panel. They are relatively more orange in shade than the three other rhebok images and are smaller in comparison. The leftmost rhebok image in Layer 3 partially overlies the human figure in Layer 2.

Layer 1 was therefore the first to be painted. Though the two leftmost rhebok images in this group of three are not engaged in any particularly informative behaviour, the third is remarkable in that it is painted in an unusual and unrealistic 'flying' posture. The 'flying' rhebok is a motif termed a trance-buck (Lewis-Williams 1981a: 100), flying buck (Lee & Woodhouse 1964), or alite (Pager 1971, 1975). The four inverted legs of the 'flying' rhebok are, I suggest, a variation of the widely-distributed winged trance-buck theme. Though Lewis-Williams (1981a: Plate 26: D and E) did not initially differentiate between the arms-back posture, which is adopted when healers bend their arms back during trance dances while receiving supernatural potency from god (Lewis-Williams 1981a: 88), and the arms-outward posture, the 'flying' rhebok in Figure 4.1 is perhaps more correctly described as depicting (or referring to) the arms-outward posture (e.g., Lewis-Williams *et al*. 2000: fig. 5, 134). In this context, it is probable that the image depicts an aspect of therianthropy, a transformed owner-of-potency who has taken on the form of a rhebok in trance. San ethnography thus shows that such an image derives from the experience of ASC as they are sought by owners-of-potency at communal trance dances.

The second layer, which comprises only one image, relates to the first layer, both spatially, because Layer 2 partially overlies an image from Layer 1, and

thematically, because the Layer 2 image also refers to the performance of the communal trance dance. It is bent at the waist, a posture which is adopted at communal trance dances (Marshall 1969: 363). Both the trance buck in Layer 1 and the bending-at-the-waist figure in Layer 2 are therefore examples of "'fragments of the dance'… images that by ethnographically verifiable postures, gestures or accoutrements, refer to the San shamanic dance" (Lewis-Williams 1999: 281; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2004b: 99–100; Lewis-Williams 2015a: 149–172).

The 'fragments of the dance' in Layers 1 and 2 provide a context for the central rhebok images in Layer 3. Though these two images do not depict any distinctive behaviours that might allude to the trance dance context or the experience of ASC, they have been painted in relation to Layer 1 and Layer 2: Layer 3 is painted in the middle of the cluster of three rhebok in Layer 1 and partially on top of the human figure in Layer 2. Because the imagery in Layer 3 has been painted in close and direct association with trance-related imagery in Layers 1 and 2 that, we can be sure, was understood conceptually by the painter of Layer 3, it is likely to also have been acquired in a similar context to those in the first two layers, probably from a vision experienced during trance. Although the three layers in Figure 4.2 were painted during different episodes, and potentially many years apart, it seems that, ultimately, the imagery from all three layers is related to, and was in each case acquired principally from, trance experience. The three layers thus constitute a conceptual unity.

In sum, culturally construed and elaborated hallucinatory visions comprise the source for much, if not all, of the imagery depicted in San rock paintings (e.g., Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1988; Lewis-Williams 1994, 1995, 2001a). The subject matter of these paintings is, however, often complex. It evidences interplay between 1) the personal experience of ASC by owners-of-potency, and 2) the communal backdrop which contextualises such experiences: the two contexts are interrelated and reinforce and mutually support each other (Dowson 1988, 1998; Lewis-Williams 1994: 280; Lewis-Williams *et al.* 2000: 134). The generation of imagery through the ritualised seeking and experience of ASC is,

however, just part of the whole process, because "[t]he making of a San rock art image must have been begun with an idea, or spiritual insight, and an impulse to 'fix' that idea to the rock surface" (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 26). It is that impulse which must have driven the whole process, and, from a performance theory perspective, it *must* be related to the task that the owner-of-potency had to perform for and in front of the group. I return to this conclusion in the next chapter after reviewing the rest of the ritualised process.

4.3.2: Manufacture of paint

The paint used to 'fix' images to the rock face is made in the second stage of the ritualised process (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 29–32). Though we know frustratingly little about how San rock painters made or prepared their paints (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 29), documentary sources suggest that it is worth distinguishing between, on the one hand, the *preparation* of paint by obtaining and processing the necessary ingredients for a paint recipe, and, on the other, the *making* of that paint by mixing those ingredients together.

Two accounts are the primary ethnographic sources on the manufacturing of San paints for rock paintings. The first comes from a seventy-four-year-old man known as Mapote, who was interviewed by Marion Walsham How, the granddaughter of French missionary David Frédéric Ellenberger[17] (How 1962: 32). Mapote was a younger son of the Phuthi chief, Moorosi, and lived between the Qacha's Nek and Quthing districts in what was then Basutoland and is today the Kingdom of Lesotho. Upon learning of How's relation to Ellenberger, who was held in high esteem by people who had known him, Mapote crossed the mountains to meet her at Qacha's Nek (How 1962: 32). How asked Mapote to paint for her, just as he had done many years earlier with his half-San stepbrothers when "they used to paint at one end of a cave whilst the true Bushmen painted at the other" (How 1962: 33). Mapote wanted to call upon some old friend to join him, but he could think of none that was still living (How 1962: 32).

[17] The Ellenberger Family, particularly D.F. Ellenberger's son, Victor, and grandson, Paul (How's cousin), copied and recorded rock art in Lesotho.

Some of Mapote's comments detail what pigments were used, where they came from, and how they were prepared. Central to his commentary was some powdered red pigment that "Mr. Crooks" gave to How (1962: 26, 35) [18]. This, Mapote identified as authentic 'Bushman' *qhang qhang*, a pigment which "glistened and sparkled" in the sunlight (How 1962: 34). The pigment came from the high "basalt mountains" (How 1962: 34) and there was a ritualised process, a transformative performance (Turner 1988: 15), behind its preparation. A raw block of the pigment:

> had to be specially prepared at full moon out of doors by a woman who heated it until red hot in dung or other fire. The rich red pigment was then ground up between two stones, the resulting powder being like that given to me by Mr. Crooks (How 1962: 35).[19]

For his painting, Mapote carefully selected a suitable stone and prepared brushes from small feathers attached to reeds (How 1962: 33). How did not wish Mapote to use her *qhang qhang*, and instead obtained some red ochre from the local store (How 1962: 34). Mapote also made paints of other colours. He made a white paint by mixing a siliceous mineral pigment with the sap of a specific plant, and a black paint by mixing the charcoal of burned sticks with water (How 1962: 36–37). Most famous, however, is what he requested to mix with his red pigment:

> he required the blood of a freshly killed eland. Not having an eland for him, early next morning [How] sent to the local butcher for a cup of freshly killed ox blood. The blood had to be fresh, otherwise it [would] coagulate and [would] not mix with the pigment or soak into the rock (How 1962: 38).

Qhang qhang was the only one "mixed with blood" (How 1962: 38). How observed the implication behind using fresh eland blood in the paint: some "Bushman paintings must have been executed immediately after a successful hunt

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[18] Two pieces of *qhang qhang* were brought to How by Samuel Masao in addition to Mr Crooks's powdered pigment (1962: 26, 34).

[19] The heating of the pigment parallels the heating of supernatural potency at the communal trance dance.

and a good meal, thus prompting cheerful and energetic thoughts" (How 1962: 38). Lewis-Williams (2001a: 31) has noted the parallel here with San trance dance contexts, where large game kills can be a cause for a dance (Lee 1967: 33; Marshall 1969: 353–356; Katz 1982a: 36), and, I add, occasions of "cheerful and energetic thoughts" (e.g., Katz 1982a: 34).

The second primary ethnographic source on the manufacturing of San paints corroborates many of Mapote's comments. It comprises several interviews between archaeologists and an elderly Mpondomise woman of part-San descent known as Maqoqa[20] (or Manqindi) Dyantyi, or 'M' (Jolly 1986; Lewis-Williams 1986; Prins 1990; Jolly & Prins 1994: 16). She was the daughter of a San painter and rain-maker called Lindiso (Jolly 1986; see also Blundell 2004: 41–43). M briefly discussed her father's activities, but she related little of what he did in the act of making an image. Her father had been somewhat secretive about his activities, but passed on his knowledge to his two daughters (Jolly & Prins 1994: 18-19). Indeed, M's sister, though she did not paint, had become a respected rain-maker (Jolly & Prins 1994: 18).

M corroborated Mapote's suggestion that there was a direct link between a fresh eland kill and a painting event (Jolly 1986: 6, see also Vinnicombe 1976: 172). She said that when an eland, an animal from which medicine could be made, was hunted, a young girl would go with the hunters. She would point at the eland an arrow covered in specially prepared 'medicine'. The eland, now supernaturally controlled, was then brought to the hunter's rock shelter while still alive. At the shelter,

> it became dizzy and would slip and fall. It would be killed by having its throat cut. M described the eland at death as making a murmuring sound, and emitting a liquid (not blood) from its nose. Cuts would be made on the eland's forehead, at the bottom of its rib cage and on its neck. *The blood taken from these cuts was mixed with a variety of ingredients, including fat from the eland's stomach, to make a 'medicine'.* The medicine was rubbed into small cuts made on the throat and back of the neck of a person

[20] This is also spelled 'Maqhoqha' by Prins (1990: 110).

> who wished to acquire its potency. The potency of the eland blood and fat, she said, stemmed from the fact that the eland was the biggest antelope, and therefore the strongest. *The remains of the mixture were used, mixed with paint, to make lines and patterns on the rock face of the shelter next to the river.* These lines were made with their fingers and were believed to protect the San from various dangers, especially lightning. *She later added that many of the paintings contained the blood of eland* (Jolly 1986: 6, emphasis added).

While Mapote described how *qhang qhang* was ritually prepared, M described the ritualised means by which some ingredients for paint—specifically one which, like Mapote's, included eland blood—were obtained. The eland hunt, made more successful with the aid of a young girl and supernatural medicine, not only provided ingredients for paint but also food, and would have been excitedly received as suggested by How (1962: 38). More importantly, however, M said that the paintings contained eland blood and fat which had in them "an unspecified 'power' or 'strength' (she used the Xhosa word '*amandla*')". This *amandla* was incorporated directly into the paint (Jolly 1986: 19), and resulted in a storehouse of potency in the images (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 32).

Several minor documentary sources corroborate both M and Mapote's mentions of eland blood or fat as ingredients in paint. One source suggests that eland fat (rather than blood) was a key ingredient (Mason 1933: 150). In 1913, M. Apthorp informed Louis Péringuey (South African Museum) that he spoke to a person called Lindiso, almost certainly M's father, who said that pigments were mixed with "the fat of the bushbuck or other animal" (quoted in Rudner 1982: 54, see also Blundell 2004: 41). Several other sources refer to unspecified fats mixed with pigments such that they could be re-heated into liquid paint (e.g., Dornan 1925: 188; Ellenberger 1953: 148; Kennan 1959). Another source suggests that the marrow from eland bones[21] was mixed with either charcoal or mineral pigments (Kannemeyer 1890: 121), a similar recipe to that represented in the 100 000-year-old paint mixtures recovered at Blombos Cave (Henshilwood *et al*. 2011: 220,

[21] Robert Jacob Gordon found a deserted rock shelter containing paint palettes in association with bones broken to extract the marrow which, he suggests, were merely part of a meal (Cullinan 1992: 49).

222). All of these sources nevertheless suggest congruent ideas: a part of the most potent animal in San cosmology was incorporated into San rock paintings and thus made those images potent. This idea is itself congruent with the San practice of synecdoche where "[p]art of a whole signals the whole, or an aspect of it (Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2004a: 98–100)" (Lewis-Williams 2015a: 153).

Mapote's commentary also implies that mineral pigment was prepared sometime before adding a binder. Unlike blood, which had to be procured and used before coagulation, mineral pigments could be ground, stored, and carried until the other necessarily paint ingredients were obtained. How and Mapote are not the only sources to refer to powered or ground up pigments (e.g., Dornan 1925: 188; Dunn 1931:188) or the heating or burning of pigments (Stanford 1910: 439; Dunn 1931: 188), and pigments (generally specular iron oxides) stored in various kinds of containers have been found or reported across southern Africa (e.g., Stow 1905: 200, 230; Ellenberger 1953: 148; Rudner 1982: 238–241 and references therein). From a performance theory perspective, there were, then, some ritualised but not necessarily instantaneous or contemporaneous preparatory stages that preceded the making of images.

While it is possible that at least some of the images in Figure 4.1 were made with *qhang qhang*, perhaps the three red-coloured rhebok images in Layer 1, there are at least three different shades of red across the three Layers of images. Some of the images in Figure 4.1 seem as if they were painted principally with red iron oxides (Layer 1). Other images are more orange in colour and are likely different pigments or contain an additional pigment component that affects the colour (Layers 2 and 3). What these different colours might mean, if anything, and whether they reflect recipe differences and not age differences is difficult to answer. Without further analyses to determine paint compositions (e.g., Johnson 1957; Huwiler 1972; Rudner 1983; Walker 1988; van Rijssen 1990; Wilson *et al*. 1990; Peisach *et al*. 1991; Clottes 1993; Hughes & Solomon 2000; Prinsloo *et al*. 2008; Tournié *et al*. 2011; Prinsloo *et al*. 2013) in relation to the layers identified, as well as the direct ages of those layers, little more can be said. Though it is possible to discern three different layers within the painted sequence shown in

Figure 4.1, it must be acknowledged that the sequence of superpositioning might span several thousands of years. Nonetheless, informed by ethnographic sources, the manufacture of the paints used in this panel undoubtedly comprised ritualised stages of pigment acquisition, preparation and paint manufacture.

4.3.3: Making rock paintings

In the third stage of the ritualised process of the production and consumption of imagery, images were painted on the rock face (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 32–33). From a performance theory perspective, it is important to stress that we know almost nothing about this phase because *it was never observed or documented in detail without being at a remove from the authentic context in which San rock paintings were made* (e.g., Stanford 1910; Dornan 1925; Dunn 1931; How 1962; Rudner 1982 and references therein; Jolly 1986; Lewis-Williams 1986; Jolly & Prins 1994). Consequently, most of what is known about this stage comes from inferences drawn from the close study of the images themselves against the backdrop of San ethnography.

We can be reasonably confident that a significant proportion of San rock paintings was made by those who had visions of and travelled between the realm of the living and the realm of the spirits because much of the imagery relates to spiritual reality (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 29). Given the range of imagery related to the communal trance dance, and the experience of ASC, it is almost certain that owners-of-potency—those who entered altered states of consciousness in the performance of healing as described in Chapter 3—were the makers of much, if not all, San imagery.

However,

> [t]he delicate workmanship and sureness of line that are evident everywhere in southern Africa suggest that it is unlikely that all shamans painted; it seems more likely that only some acquired this special skill. This inference is in accordance with |Xam overlapping categories of shamans (Lewis-Williams 1981a, 1992). Even as there were shamans of the game, shamans of the rain, and healers, there may well have been ‘shamans of the images’ whose

> special skill was the manifesting of the spirit world in the rock shelters (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 32).

These ideas are partly corroborated by M's statements: she said that "[m]edicine men did the painting" (Jolly 1986: 6, but see Butler 2001: 17). San owners-of-potency, though not obviously and visually differentiated hierarchically relative to other people in the same group, nevertheless had particular skills; indeed, they spent many years training and, like hunters, had experience and know-how for the successful accomplishment of certain tasks (e.g., Hewitt [1986] 2008: appendix B). Following Lewis-Williams (2001a: 32) quoted above, and because, as he notes, categories of owners-of-potency overlapped among the |Xam, I suggest that the making of images required a comparable set of skills and training. As Lewis-Williams (2001a: 32) has suggested, it is therefore unlikely that all owners-of-potency painted as only some would acquire the necessary skills. When the variety of subject matter in San rock paintings is taken into account, it seems clear to me that *owners-of-potency of all kinds*, including healers, game-controllers, and rain-controllers, made images, rather than just one specific dedicated category of "'shamans of the images'" (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 32).

Though it is likely that it was owners-of-potency who painted, it is unlikely that they did so while in trance (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 32–33). Lewis-Williams (2001a: 33) has drawn on Wordsworth's remark on poetry to suggest that paintings were not made in states of trance, but rather that the act of painting happened later, and was in that sense like 'powerful emotion recollected in tranquillity'. He has argued elsewhere that the making of images was part of the owner-of-potency's socially significant symbolic labour of a piece with the other tasks performed by owners-of-potency (Lewis-Williams 1982: 433). A secondary function of image-making is seen in the use of images to introduce novices to the horrors of trance, thereby alleviating some of their fear about travelling beyond the realm of daily life and training them in the ways of the owners-of-potency (Lewis-Williams 1982: 435). The making of paintings, therefore, had a recursive and reinforcing relationship with the acquisition of imagery (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 33).

Moreover, certain kinds of images are painted in such a way that they imply that there is space behind the rock face and connected spaces between rock faces. These include images that disappear or appear from behind an irregularity in the rock surface (Chapter 5). It is today widely accepted that these paintings imply that the rock surface was a kind of veil suspended between the world of the living and the world of the spirits (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990).

With the interactions between images and the rock face conceptualised in this way, it has been argued that, in the act of image-making, an image-maker was "*performing a ritual* that blended the material world of daily life with the spirit realm" (Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2008: 430, emphasis added). As images are painted on a pseudo-surface that is more realistically thought of as three-dimensional rather than two-dimensional, static images may more correctly be thought of as dynamic images because they interact with this 'surface'—they are images that are doing things. It is unlikely that we should think of such interactions only as having already happened because the images remain on the rock face after their making, continuously interacting with it.

In the context of the making of finger-painted dots and handprints, Lewis-Williams and Blundell (1997: 53) have noted that, "paint was a mediator between the human body, the rock face and the spirit world that was believed to lie behind it", and that the rock paintings "were not representations of or substitutes for 'real' things that existed elsewhere—such as animals out in the veld. Rather, they were complex 'things-in-themselves', with their own autonomy, existence, power and socially situated modes of production."

As we will see in Chapter 5, rock paintings, by virtue of the interactions in which they were engaged, allowed, in the process of being made and once finished, for the tasks performed by the owners-of-potency to be completed. Images were pregnant with supernatural potency because of their supernatural ingredients; they thus did more in the process of being made than act only as aids to confirm the acts, skills and prestige of image-makers. Images had, at least the potential, to do and to perform, in and of themselves as complex and "powerful 'things-in-themselves'" (Lewis-Williams 1994: 282) and to participate in the performances

of their makers.

The ritualised act of image-making has been elaborated to suggest that:

> Shaman-artists used both their technical and their esoteric spiritual skills to coax the animals and other inhabitants of the spirit world from behind the 'veil' and then, using ritually prepared, potent paint, to fix these visions on the rock face for all to see and share (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 33).

Bearing these points in mind, I return to the images on the ceiling of the southern part of MEL5 (Figures 4.1, C.5). Given that the painted images reference the trance dance, I argue that they were fixed visions, residues of the sharing of spiritual reality and insights to which only the image-making owners-of-potency had access, even when it was experienced in the communal context of the trance dance. By placing one image on top of and in relation to another, the image-making owners-of-potency successively shared insights, first, with the wider community—which, we know from performance theory, may have participated dialogically and dynamically in the image-maker's performance and thus influenced the ways in which the image-makers shared their insights—*and*, second, with fellow (perhaps departed) owners-of-potency (cf. Lewis-Williams 2001a: 28). In this way, the fixing of the vision 'for all to see and share' parallels healing at the dance in which all people are free to attend, participate, and be healed. The painted images were thus more than just "a residue of a ritual sequence" (Lewis-Williams & Blundell 1997: 53).

Whatever took place during the making of an image was, in a sense, contained by *where* the performance took place—outside of the image-making event, the *specific* interactions did not exist. Other performances or events (such as the making of another image or the telling of a tale or the holding of a dance) must occur for similar interactions to take place. In any case, the making of an image was a direct engagement with the rock face and shelter, and relied upon several preceding stages.

4.3.4: Using rock paintings

In the fourth and final stage of the ritualised process, the images painted on the rock face were used (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 33–35). Some of M's comments expanded our knowledge on aspects of the use of rock paintings. She expressed a notion of physically interacting with paintings imbued with eland 'power' that, when touched (Jolly 1986: 6), or faced by dancers (Jolly & Prins 1994: 19), allowed the supernatural potency stored in the images to be transferred:

> Her actions recalled the 'laying on of hands' during a San curing dance: shamans place their hands on people and draw sickness out of them and into their own bodies; they then expel the sickness through a 'hole' in the back of the neck, and it flies back to the spirit world from whence it came. A comparable process of transference of supernatural essence, it seems, could take place between a person and a painted image imbued with power. *In the case of paintings, the images were thus mediators between the material world and spiritual realms and entities* (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 34, emphasis added).

In this way, San images did not perform once-off functions in the moment of their making; indeed, they were "powerful 'things-in-themselves'" (Lewis-Williams 1994: 282) which, as we shall see, continued to be involved in a number of interactions (Chapter 5).

From the perspective of performance theory, the 'use' of painted imagery is somewhat problematic. Current connotations of the term imply that images could only be used after they were made, rather than images *performing in the moment* that they were made. But treating 'use' in strictly after-the-fact terms is problematic because it ignores any aspects of use that relate to the act of image-making. I suggest a distinction that, to my knowledge, has not hitherto been considered but is illuminated in light of performance theory. In dealing with image-making performances, it is worth distinguishing between, on the one hand, *use-after-the-act*, and, on the other, *use-in-the-act* in relation to painting. I deal with each of these in turn.

Apart from M's account of touching the paintings, most of what has been said

about aspects of *use-after-the-act* comes not from documentary sources but from archaeological studies. The action of touching the rock face directly with a part of the body rather than an implement is associated both with touching existing rock paintings, and with the making of certain images, such as finger dots and handprints (Lewis-Williams & Blundell 1997). In some cases, the material evidence for engaging with rock paintings suggests that such engagements were broadly similar to that described by M, such as in the smoothing of painted surfaces in the southern regions of the Western Cape Province (Yates & Manhire 1991: 3), or in the Waterberg area of the Limpopo Province where Ghilraen Laue recorded evidence for the touching and rubbing with pigment of painted human figures in what is known as the Waterberg Posture (Laue 2000: 49). A space in a line of figures from that region has been rubbed in the same way as the visible figures, as if the space was a 'missing figure' totally immersed into the spirit world behind the rock face but nevertheless visible to the person who rubbed the other figures (Laue 2000: 49, fig. 11).

Similar engagements with images (touching and rubbing) are evidenced at engraved rock art sites. Sven Ouzman (2001) has highlighted the attention given to the visual aspects of rock art while underscoring that non-visual components, such as marks produced as the result of percussive activities; intentionally rubbed or 'cut' areas; and the deliberate flaking of engraved rocks, have received far less attention. These activities were done in order to produce sounds that played a role in the performative and ritualised activities that took place at some sites (Ouzman 2001: 240; see also Rifkin 2009)[22]; to touch spiritually potent images and rocks by engaging with them or renewing faded images (Ouzman 2001: 237, 247); "and to possess pieces of potent places" (Ouzman 2001: 237). Jeremy Hollmann has considered the use of comparable engraved art—what he terms 'gestural markings' produced by hammering, rubbing and cutting—specifically in relation to "people's past performances" (Hollmann 2017: 76), such as girls' rites of passage, at the Gestoptefontein-Driekuil engraving complex (Hollmann 2017: 74–

[22] The acoustics of rock art sites is an active area of research. In many areas of the world, the acoustics are related to the images and the performances that took place at those sites. The acoustics of the MR have not yet been investigated.

107, 336–346).

The consideration of the use of marks and gestural markings at engraving sites are different from the consideration of the use of paintings: engraved markings were made *as part of a performance* and thus relate to an aspect of *use-in-the-act* rather than a later or subsequent stage of use. Use-in-the-act is thus more widely explored for engravings than for paintings (e.g., Ouzman 2001; Rifkin 2009; Hollmann 2017), but at least one aspect of use-in-the-act of rock paintings has recently been considered.

John Kinahan argues that some rock paintings in Namibia were made in ritual seclusion by itinerant owners-of-potency as part of "solitary preparation for ritual activity" (Kinahan 2017a: 564). At |Ui-||aes, for example, an image of a female kudu has been placed on the roof of a long and narrow vestibule, away from public view (Kinahan 2017: 558–559). Given the specific association of female kudu with women's initiation practices, the making of this image "only 400 m from [a] women's initiation site" was, suggests Kinahan, an important preparation of the owner-of-potency for his role as a ritual specialist in the initiation of women (Kinahan 2017a: 560, 564). In this way, the 'use' of the image occurred *in the act* of its making and not at some later point.

In light of these instances of use, we can turn to the MR images. The most recent group of images in Figure 4.1, Layer 3, show some traces of abrasion that suggest use-after-the-act of image-making (Figure 4.2C). This abrasion, though clear as a trace of activity, is ambiguous as material evidence for interaction with the image akin to that described by M because it looks quite recent and, because the ceiling is quite low, it is possible that the abrasion is accidental. In any case, it is likely that the primary uses of these images in Figure 4.2 were uses-in-the-act, though quite what they were is, for now, difficult to say.

Direct engagement with painted images in the form of rubbing, does, however, seem to have taken place elsewhere at the same site (Figures 4.3, C.5) and at another site on the MR. At MEL5, it is clear that at least one image has been rubbed, but it is unclear how this was done and whether it was an intense once-off

abrasive activity or one that recurred. At MEL7 (Figures 4.4, C.7), a panel on an area of rock well beyond the reach of any animals has parts of it that have been smoothed: in several places, it is clear that the rough points of the surface of the densely painted panel on the northern end of MEL7 have been worn down. There is now a difference in the vibrancy of colour between lower and higher areas of the painted rock surface, and a textural difference between those regions which suggests a somewhat sustained period of use-after-the-act for the images in this panel (Figure 4.4).



Figure 4.3: A rubbed image at MEL5. (A) An image (tortoise?) with four limbs and a possible tail. (B) The lower surface to the left of a step in the rock face has been protected from abrasion by the higher surface to the right: it is more orange left of the step than to the right where the paint has become grey from abrasion. (C) Close-up of the centre of image A. Abrasion has smoothed high points of the surface (grey) relative to non-abraded lower points (orange).

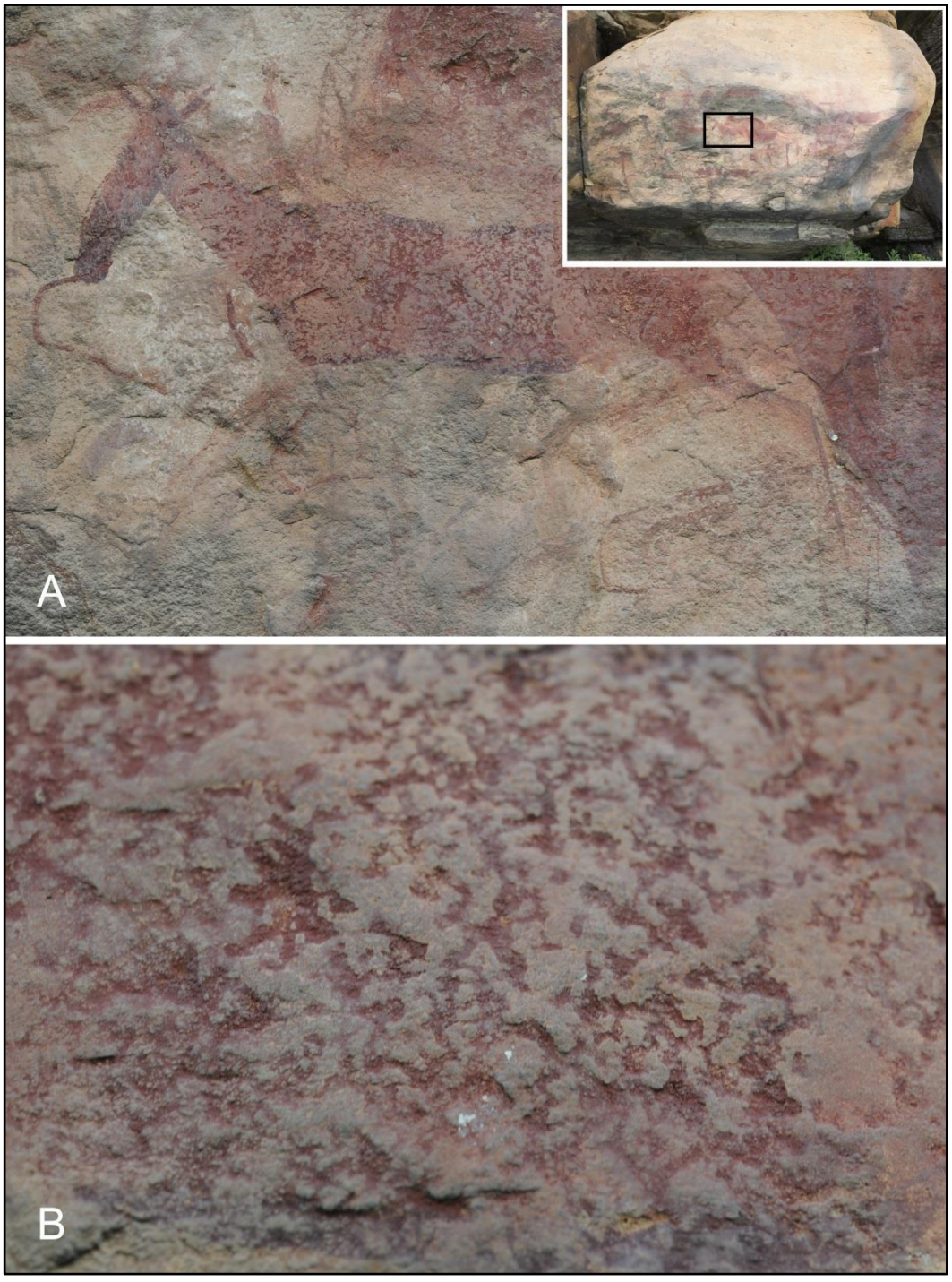


Figure 4.4: Rubbing of a painted panel at MEL7. (A) Close-up of a rubbed hartebeest image from the inset panel 3.2 m in length. (B) Detail of the rubbed surface where the highest points of the rock surface have been flattened smooth and are discoloured relative to the lower points.

4.4: From ritual process to interactive images

In sum, the process that *is* the practice of San rock painting comprises four stages in which ritualised behaviours take place. While distinct, the four stages of the process lead and feed into one another: they are interactive processes. The documentary and archaeological sources at our disposal allow for the reconstruction of these different stages and the realisation of the connections and interactions between them. They reveal that behind each image is a process and, in that sense, the rock paintings are "a residue of a ritual sequence" (Lewis-Williams & Blundell 1997: 53).

As previously observed, great gaps remain in our knowledge of the latter two stages of the ritualised process of the production and consumption of imagery because comparatively little is known from documentary sources. One way to attempt to reduce the size of these gaps is to approach them with particular attention to the interactions implied by the documentary sources and by the images themselves while keeping in mind that,

> [i]f rock art is seen as *active* in the construction of social relations, rather than as a passive reflection of society, it cannot be studied and understood in isolation from power relations and, moreover, from other expressive forms, such as myth and ritual, that similarly reproduce or subvert social relations (Lewis-Williams 1994: 277–278, emphasis added).

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1: Painted and implied interactions

Certain sets of relationships are implied in all San rock paintings. The images are themselves a product of interactive processes and show, either directly or implicitly, relationships both immediate to the making of the images and beyond. The many MR images are images of action and interaction; in general, they depict scenes of activity or are themselves 'doing things'. These actions and interactions are not site-specific, nor are they regionally restricted; moreover, they parallel or resemble those in other forms of San expressive culture. Even when painted on a surface in a rock shelter, the images do not exist in isolation from social relations between people, animals and spirits. Interactions sometimes permeate the boundary between worlds and are almost always *inter-related*. Although it has long been noted that the rock face was, for the San, a significant context for their images (e.g., Battiss 1948: 36; Willcox: 1956: 49; Lewis-Williams 1980: 475; Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990; Woodhouse 1990), the close study of the MR sites suggests that its importance may have been somewhat underestimated. The support and context of Western imagery have, of course, been recognised by art historians (e.g., Taft & Mayer 2000; Harris 2006) but it seems that the rock face was even more important for the San. Seen from the perspective of performance theory, the rock face is inseparable from the rock shelter itself and, by extension, from any performances that took place there.

5.2: Interactions between image-makers and the rock face

There are at least five kinds of interaction between painters and images. The first kind—we will come to the others later in this chapter—is marked by image-makers acquiring an image and making it by 'fixing' it to the rock face: *the two*

cannot exist independently in the event of the making of that image. In making an image, the image-maker is 'doing something': he or she can be said to be performing an aspect of symbolic labour (Lewis-Williams 1982: 433), a task related to his or her specialised skills as an owner-of-potency. Thus performing activities was necessarily of significance to the images (cf. Vinnicombe 1972a: 194).

The simplest MR images (i.e. those images with few or no direct physical connections to other images) show clearly these most basic interactions. Image-makers *did* something by making images. The images *also* did something by engaging directly with the rock face. In that sense, we can begin to see how San imagery is, in fact, active. Images not only depict scenes and actions, but they are actively *engaged* in specific interactions. This activity is mirrored by the interactive processes that led to its making and in other San performances, such as the communal trance dance that was discussed in Chapter 3.

The way in which some images were painted suggests that image-makers engaged with the rock face in very particular, very specific and highly, but not exclusively, visual ways. But how was this engagement seen by the image-makers? As mentioned in Chapter 4, San ethnography and imagery, and independent neuropsychological research collectively suggest that the rock face was not a two-dimensional *tabula rasa*, but rather a three-dimensional and permeable interface between the world of the living and the spirit world (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990). According to Lewis-Williams and Dowson (1990: 14), image-makers entered the rock face at specific places or coaxed spirit animals (and potentially other kinds of spirits) through the veil (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 33). *Whatever the case, certain image-makers* "*must have examined the rock face very carefully*" (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990: 14, emphasis added) because,

> [p]aintings frequently appear to enter and leave cracks and steps in the rock face. Others are 'folded' into concave right angles; still others come off the edges of convex right angles. Some are fitted neatly into facets or hollows in the rock and a few incorporate nodules of rock (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990: 5).

All along the MR are examples of these painted interactions with the veil between worlds, where image-makers sought out irregularities and peculiarities of the rock face. They show, on the one hand, that the sites were places where contact was made with the world of the spirits, and, on the other, that such contacts were not strictly uniform. I now consider three types of interactions between images, which are "powerful 'things-in-themselves'" (Lewis-Williams 1994: 282), and the rock face, the veil between worlds (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990: 14).

5.2.1: Depressions and containment

It is not uncommon to find San images painted in depressions or recesses of the rock face. The placing of images in depressions has been noted but not adequately explored and theorised. Such depressions, discussed by Battiss (1948: 36) and Woodhouse (1990: 112–113, 1996: 72–73), vary in their size and depth. Importantly, there is currently no standardised terminology in use among San rock art researchers. My use of 'depression' is conceptually related to the placement of San rock art images in concave or recessed areas of rock surfaces that are not uniform geological or geomorphological entities. Because there is conceptual unity but physical variability, I use 'depression' in a general sense to refer to a variety of features of the rock face, the most frequent of which are small cavernous weathering features of the rock face that are concave in shape with some remarkable depth. Such features are, in the geomorphology literature, referred to as 'honeycombs' (Grab *et al.* 2011: 7) or grouped under the umbrella term 'tafoni' (Groom *et al.* 2015). In some cases, and under very specific conditions, tafoni caverns can amalgamate and give rise to a rock shelter (Grab *et al.* 2011: 8). My use of depression excludes Woodhouse's (1990: 113) 'hollows': I reserve 'hollows' for smaller unpainted negative features of the rock face that are sometimes incorporated into images.

Some MR images have been placed into depressions so that the outline of the depression surrounds the painted image or images and in that way 'contains', or 'frames' (Woodhouse 1996: 73), them. Contained images on the MR depict, among other things, people and animals engaged in various activities or

behaviours. In each case, the images interact directly with the rock face which surrounds and contains them.

Depressions are a characteristic, if not defining, feature of MEL1 (Figures 5.1) where a variety of subjects are placed in depressions caused by honeycomb weathering (Figures 5.2, 5.3B). Images have also been placed in depressions at MEL4 and MEL7 (Figure 5.4). At MEL3, a scene is painted in an oblong depression: some human figures interact with a standing antelope to the left and a seated hartebeest to the right (Figure 5.5). Human-animal interactions implied by this painting are discussed later.

The theme of containment is not, however, invariable. At MEL4, a painted scene is contained within a depression, but in this case it is not unambiguously clear that the depression contains the images: at the top left, a hollow-bodied bovine therianthrope with pendulous breasts is painted on the boundaries of the depression (Figure 5.6, cf. Woodhouse 1996: 72). The openness of the depression is paralleled by another example from MEL4 where the depression has an upper concavity but no bottom limit; the image has, nevertheless, been placed right inside the most convex part of the rock surface (Figure 5.4).

The unique relationships between depressions and the images that they contain suggest, not only that they were deliberately placed into the depression (and not on some other surface), but that they represent a particular kind of contact and interaction with the world of the spirits through this particular engagement—the placement of images into a *containing* space in the rock face. As can be seen from the examples of painted depressions (Figures 5.2–5.6), images in depressions are seldom superimposed by other images and, when they are, they tend to be *directly superimposed* as if they were being repainted, or as if the same experience was being repeated (Figure 5.3). One possibility is that, because the images in the depressions tend generally not to interact directly with other images outside of the depression, the interaction between the depression and the image placed into it represents *individual*, rather than communal, insights where imagery acquired by an owner-of-potency through visions or spiritual experiences was ‘brought through’ the rock face in a very specific, somewhat idiosyncratic engagement with

the world of the spirits at the rock face (cf. Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990: 14; Lewis-Williams 2001a: 33).

Depressions are not, however, the only way that images were contained. At MEL5, a rhebok is painted lying down and looking towards the viewer (Figure 5.7). This image is not contained by a concave depression, but rather by a shallow flake negative which contains the body of the antelope; only the limbs cross the lip of the flaked area. Then, at MEL1, deep cracks in the rock face surround and isolate an area of rock upon which only one image has been painted (Figure 5.8). The cracks contain the image and are, in that sense, thematically similar to depressions in the rock face.

The containment theme explicit in the use of depressions and flake negatives is developed at a larger scale at the smallest MR site: MEL2 (Figure 5.9). Here, a rectangular negative space was left in the rock face when a block detached from it. In the resulting space, images were made and are contained. Unlike most of the other sites on the ridge, MEL2 is not a rock shelter and thus does not have an overhang or a floor: the images are entirely contained by the rock face and sit in a negative space within it (Figure C.2). The relationship between images and the rock face at MEL2, together with the other ways in which features of the rock face contain the images painted in them, suggest that painted sites contained performances of image-making in the sense that the images are fixed in an implied three-dimensional space that was, nevertheless, open for others to view, and interact with and use the images.

The theme of containment is thus a spectrum between, at the one end, images contained by the shelters in which they are painted and, at the other end, images that are completely contained by specific features of the rock face. This wide range of containment features means that the image-maker had, within a tradition of similar containments, avenues of creativity along which images could be differently contained (cf. Guenther 1999: 135). The implication here is that not all containments were equal. I suggest that while image-making performances were contained, generally and traditionally, in rock shelters (because that is where image-making owners-of-potency could engage with the spirit-world), image-

makers who placed painted images in specific depressions sought to emphasise the *specific nature of the relationship* between a particular image and a particular feature of the rock face *so that it would be seen as the image-maker's direct vision from or of the spirit-world* by other people or entities. Containment in this sense was, therefore, performative and related to the way in which an image-maker performed image-making for his or her 'audience'.

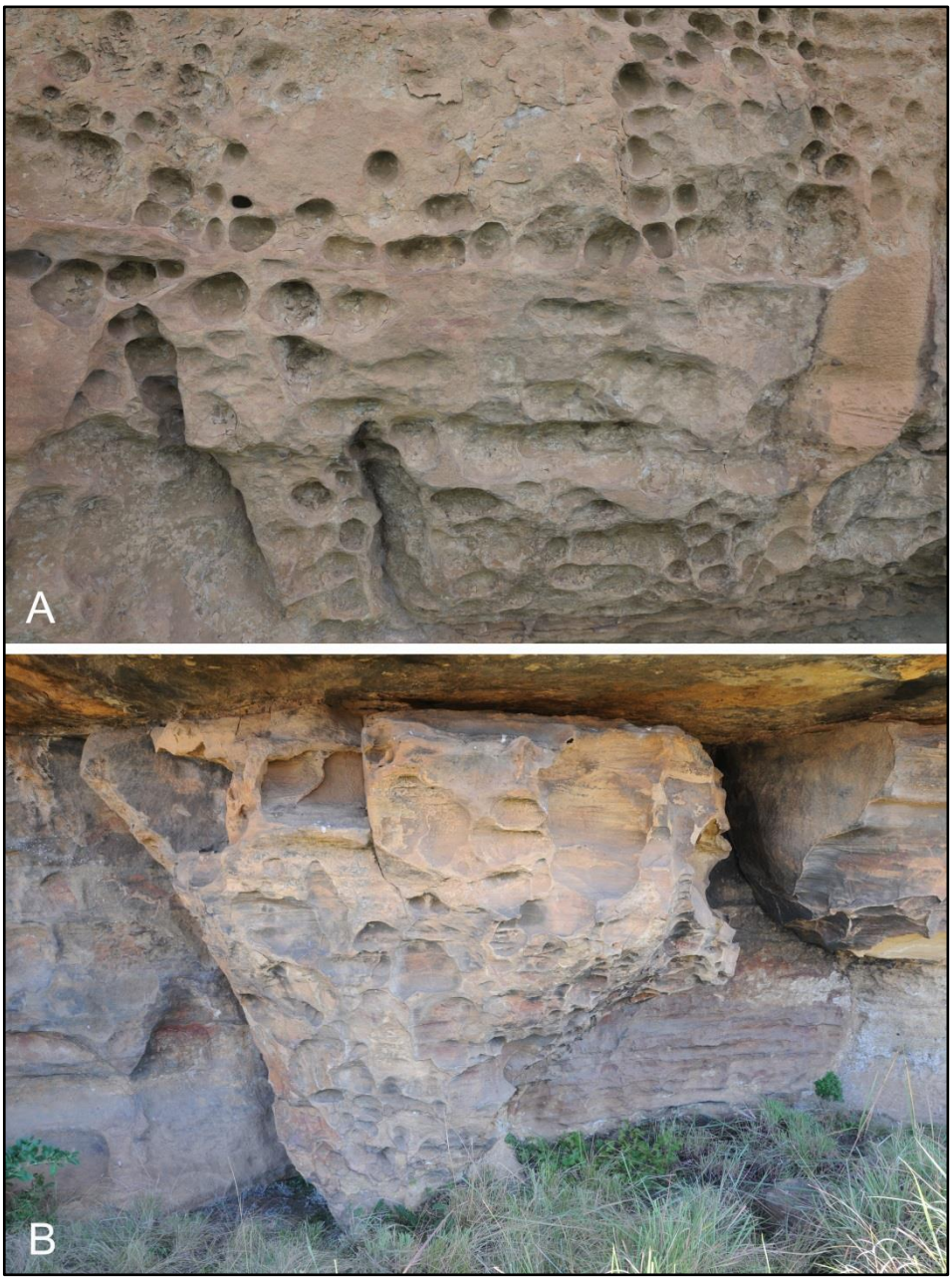


Figure 5.1. The rock surface at MEL1 is composed of depressions. (A) A view of the cliff face with depressions, specifically honeycomb features, to the left of MEL1. (B) A view of the rock face at MEL1.



Figure 5.2. A group of four rhebok painted in a large depression at MEL1. (A) Original photograph. (B) A digital enhancement of image A produced following procedure 2 in Appendix E. The depression is 50 cm wide.

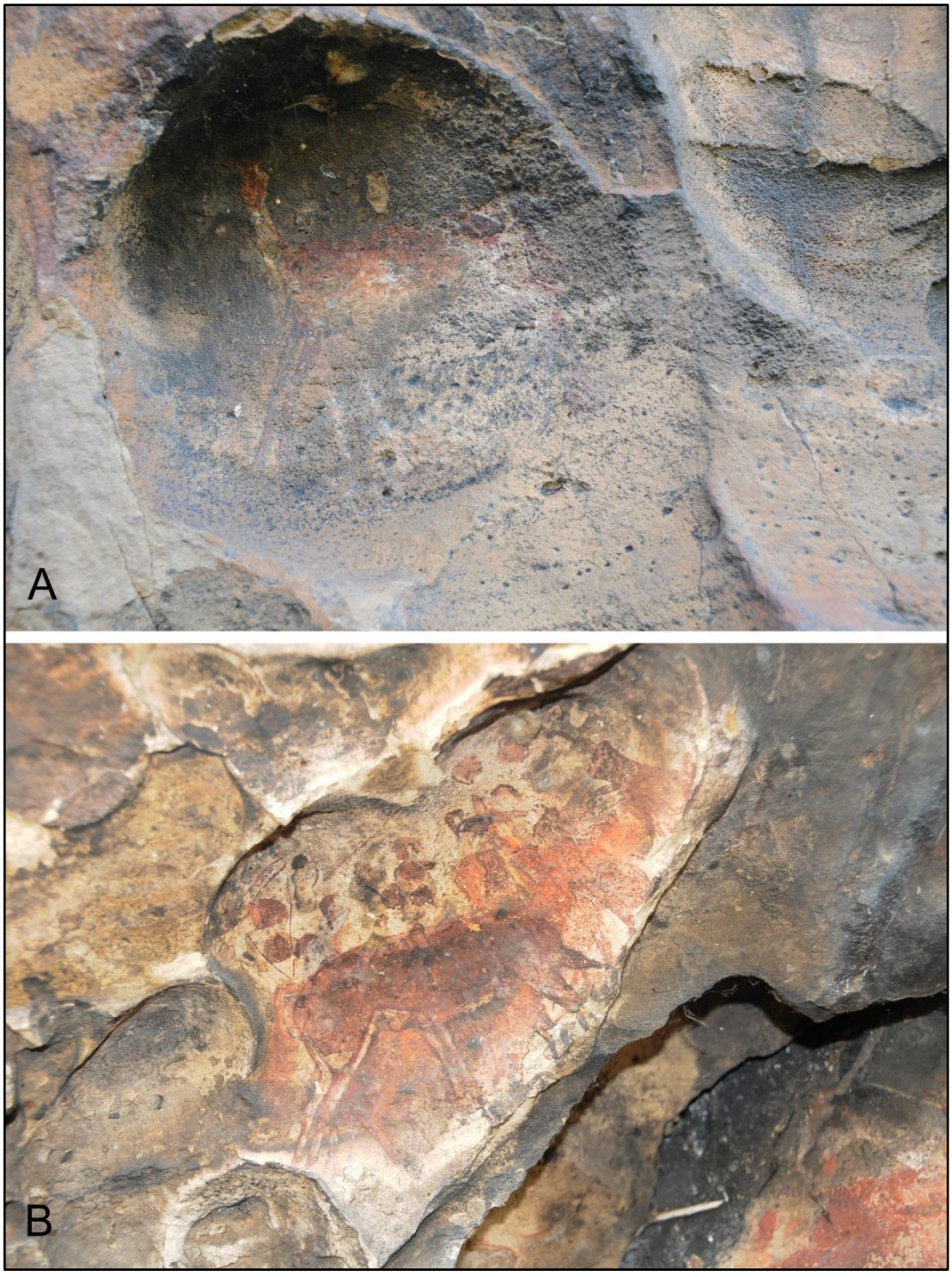


Figure 5.3. (A) A shaded polychrome rhebok contained in a circular depression at MEL1. It overlies a white rhebok. (B) A depression contains a group of seated figures, some of whom are superimposed by two antelope, at MEL1.

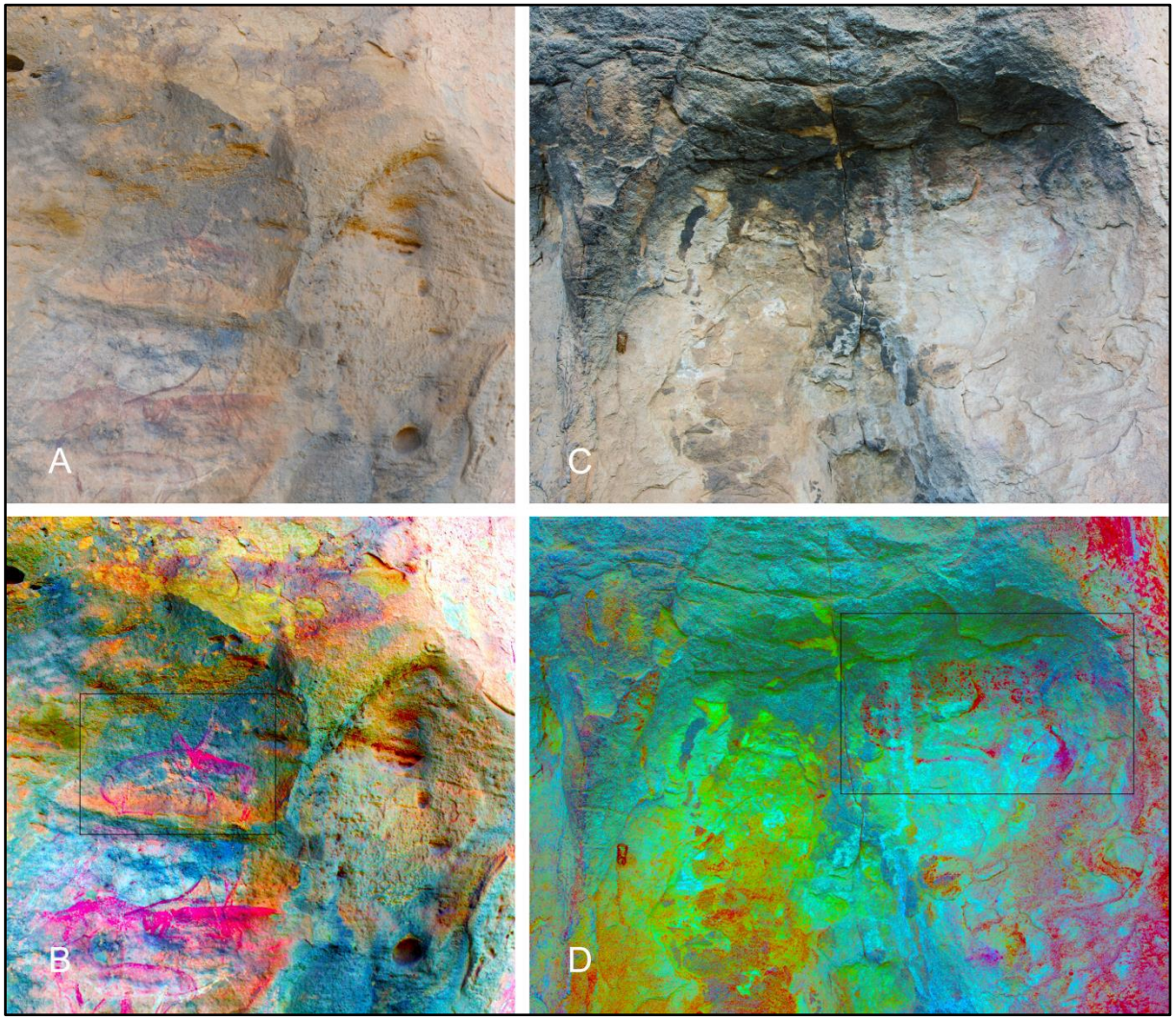


Figure 5.4. (A) Two rhebok images in a shallow depression at MEL7. One is seated facing right while the other stands facing left. (B) A DStretch© (LAB) enhancement of image A. (C) The faint remains of a seated antelope image in a depression at MEL4. (D) DStretch© (LRE) enhancement of image C.



Figure 5.5. (A) Painted human-animal interaction in a depression at MEL3. (B) A digital enhancement of image A produced following procedure 2 in Appendix E (A-channel) reveals the hartebeest horns of the antelope at right. The human figure on the left extends something to the head of the leftmost antelope.

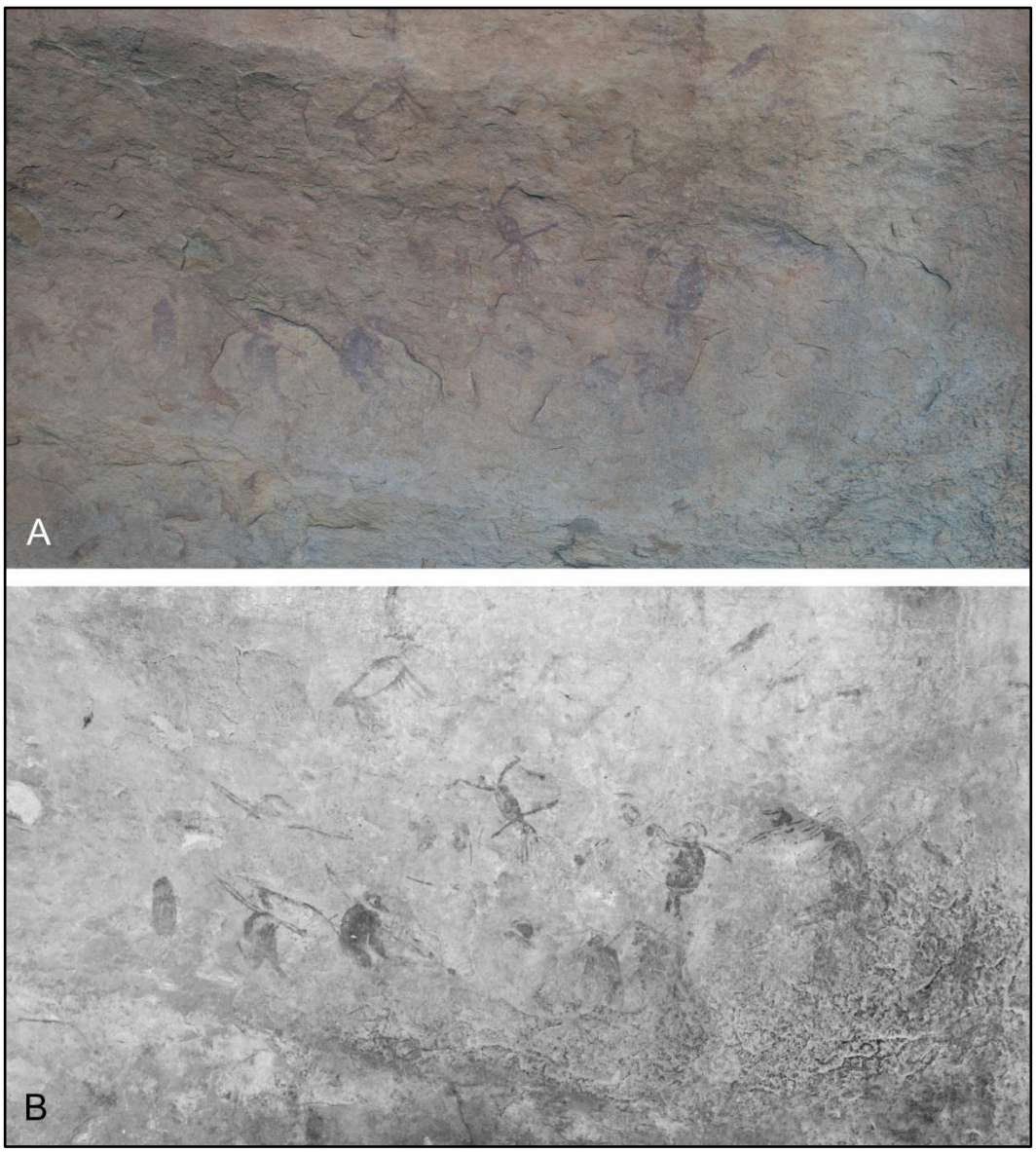


Figure 5.6. (A) Images painted in a depression at MEL4. Above the sprawled-out central figure and to the left is a hollow-bodied quadrupedal figure with two pendulous breasts behind its front legs. It is painted on the upper boundary of the depression. (B) A digital enhancement of image A produced following procedure 2 in Appendix E (A-channel).



Figure 5.7. (A) A shaded polychrome rhebok painted in a flake negative at MEL5. (B) A digital enhancement of image A produced following procedure 1 in Appendix E (DStretch ©, YRD) reveals the position of the painted limbs which transgress the lip of the flake negative.



Figure 5.8. Cracks in the rock face at MEL3 contain a painted white figure. The figure's lower body seems to 'disappear' at its waist behind the rock face where there are two small steps. Note that its left hand is raised to its nose, and the position of these relative to the hollows in the rock face at the top left.



Figure 5.9. MEL2 is a painted recess in the rock face that contains all the images that are painted within it. (A) Original photograph. (B) Digital enhancement of image A produced following procedure 2 in Appendix E. This measures 1.9 m in length.

5.2.2: Cracks, steps and edges

The engagements between the image-makers and the MR rock faces—and, by implication, with beings in the spirit world—are also evidenced through interactions between rock paintings and cracks, steps, and edges in the rock face where parts of an image disappear into or appear from a feature of the rock face (e.g., Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990; Woodhouse 1990: 114; Loubser *et al.* 1990: 110). Given the number of sites on the MR, an image-maker could deliberately seek out a place and a surface with one or more of these features rather than one without them (cf. Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990: 14). All of the interactions between images and features of the rock face imply the movement *of the image* into or out of the rock face. The images, which disappear into or emerge from the rock face, thus parallel the ability of owners-of-potency themselves to travel between realms (for example, at the trance dance, see Marshall 1969: 377–378, see Figure 5.18) and evidence the symbolic labour of the owners-of-potency who, in the act of making images at the rock face, mediated between realms on behalf of a broader group (Lewis-Williams 1981a, 1982, 1994, 1995, 2001a).

At MEL1, a feature of the rock face was selected to show this kind of interaction: an eland appears from a crack in the rock face between two surfaces (Figure 5.10). Most of the eland's body is 'hidden' behind the crack and covered by the rock face. This image is an example of owners-of-potency using "their technical and their esoteric spiritual skills to coax" an eland from "behind the rock face" (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 33).

Another motif commonly painted in direct association with cracks, as well as steps, in the rock face is the 'thin red line'—an expression of the ethnographically-described 'threads of light' which allow owners-of-potency and spirits-of-the-dead to move between places supernaturally (Lewis-Williams 1981b; Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990: 5–7; Lewis-Williams *et al.* 2000; Keeney 2003: 38–45). At MEL7, a thin red line fringed with white dots disappears into or emerges from a step at the left (Figure 5.11). At MEL5, a crack

in the rock face has been sought out and a thin red line weaves dramatically in and out of it in multiple places, disappearing and reappearing across the length of the rock face (Figure 5.12). A thick build-up of dust and mineral growth on the rock surface at MEL5 obscures further associations between the motif and other images and features of the rock face. At MEL3, a variation of the motif—a thin red line fringed on each side with *solid white lines rather than dots* (cf. Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990; Lewis-Williams *et al*. 2000)—is painted (Figure 5.13). These lines come into contact with the hooves of antelope at all three MR sites, suggesting that interactions between these kinds of line and other images, as well as features, are not accidental but are rather deliberate engagements between antelope and line that were, for whatever reasons, emphasized by the image-makers in the process of their performance of image-making.

It is important to recognize here that though the painted interactions were enacted by image-making owners-of-potency, who engaged with the rock face and the world of the spirits in the act of image-making, it is the painted images, and not the image-makers, that interact directly with the rock face. The thin red lines, for example, do so as they weave in and out of the rock face (cf. Lewis-Williams *et al.* 2000: 126). In some instances, as at site CLO1 near the Eastern Cape town of Lady Grey, features of the rock face are enhanced and "'opened'" with paint (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990: 6). *In this way, the images are active participants in the image-makers' engagements with the rock face.*

The emergence and disappearance theme is expressed, in a different way, at several other MR sites through the use of steps and edges of the rock face. As we might expect for San expressive culture, the expression of these themes are variable while maintaining general coherence. For example, images at some of the MR sites do not transgress steps in the rock face (cf. Lewis-Williams 1980: 476, fig. 2), or the edges between two surfaces. At MEL6, an enigmatic humanoid shape stops at a step. The form and meaning of the shape are unclear, but it interacts unambiguously with the step (Figure 1.4A). At MEL14, which lies north and west of the MR (see Figure 1.2B), the legs of a human figure end at a right-angled edge of the rock surface (Figure 5.14). At MEL5, flaking of the rock face

formed a step at least 5 mm deep. Above the step and to the left, a small mongoose-like creature touches the edge of the step with its tail, but not its feet. To its right, a rhebok painted in white, and with its head raised up as if smelling something, touches the edge of the step with its hooves painted as if walking along the edge of the step (Figure 5.15)[23]. At MEL1, another white rhebok, looking over its shoulder, was painted in the bottom right-hand corner of an angular raised area of the rock face surrounded by cracks and its legs do not extend beyond the edge of the raised area (Figure 5.16).

It may thus seem paradoxical to note that cracks, steps, and edges were sometimes 'ignored'. For instance, a human figure on the far right of a panel at MEL6 (Figure 1.4A) is painted as if walking along a crack, while another image in the same panel is painted directly *across* a step without any visual indication that the step was of any consequence to the image. Similarly, at MEL4, the red remains of a kaross-clad figure carrying a bow on its back lie on top of a step in the rock face (Figure 5.17).

That cracks, steps and edges were both 'employed' and 'ignored' implies an aspect of performativity for the making of MR imagery. The way in which the image-maker used the rock face was related to the *performance of image-making*: the act of directly relating images to cracks, steps or edges was probably different in meaningful ways from *not* relating the images to those features (cf. Lewis-Williams 2001a: 34). The image-maker interacted with the rock face by examining it very carefully, selecting (or ignoring) a specific feature and then painting an image in relation to that feature. However, without the painted image being in some way related to the features of the rock face by the image-maker, and having some aspect that allows the relation to happen, there cannot be any *interaction*. How the images themselves interact with the rock face thus has significant, unexplored implications for the role the images themselves play in the performance of San image-making.

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[23] Some writers have commented on the absence in San rock art of painted ground lines or attempts at landscape (e.g., Tongue 1909: 2). This may be because the 'surfaces' did not need to be depicted because they were present on or behind the rock face.

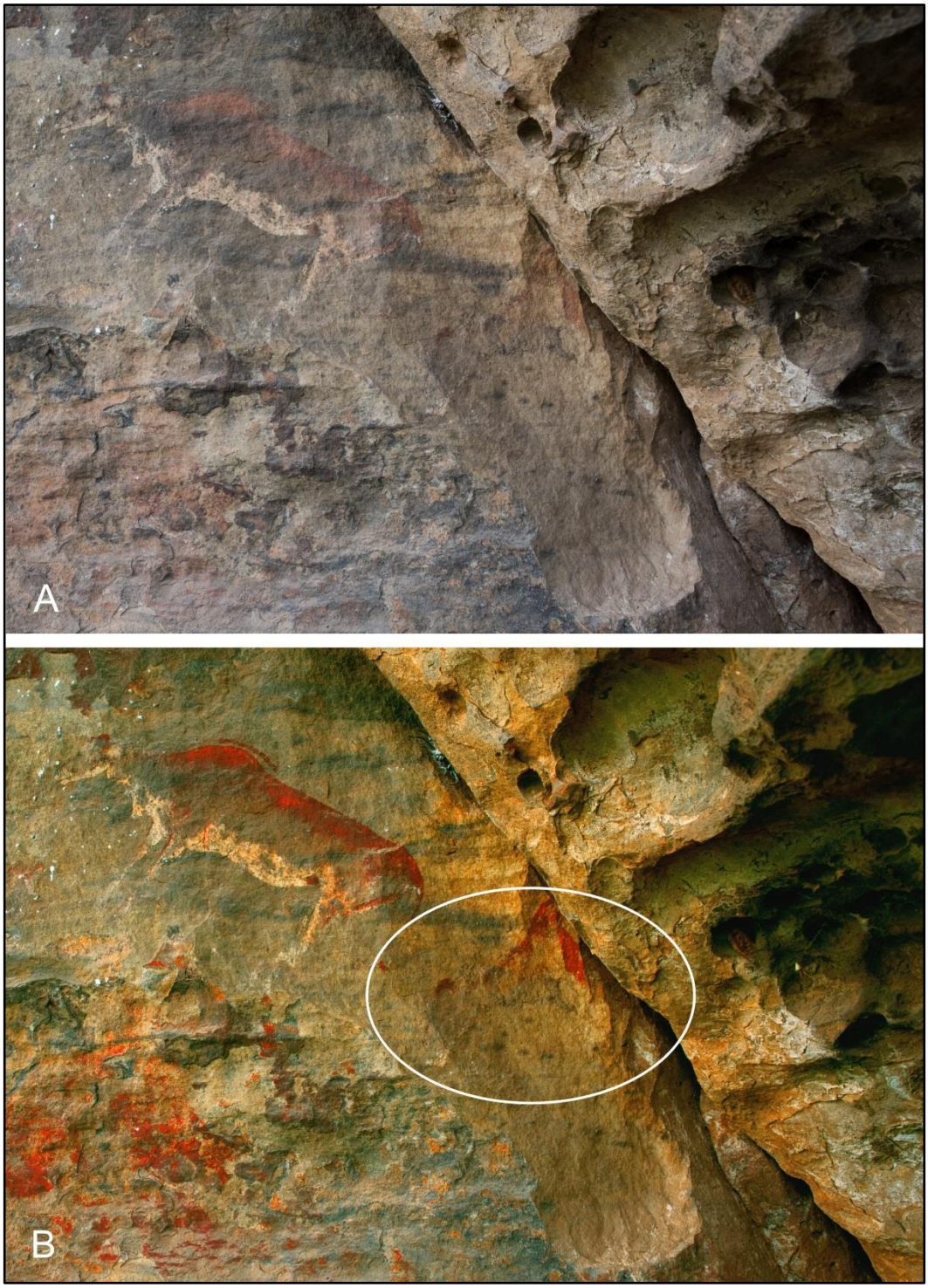


Figure 5.10. An eland emerges from a crack in the rock face at MEL1. (A) Original photograph. (B) A digital enhancement of image A, produced following procedure 2 in Appendix E, renders the head and forequarters of the emerging eland more visible.



Figure 5.11. The thin red line motif at MEL7. (A) Original photograph. (B) A digital enhancement of image A, produced following procedure 2 in Appendix E, renders the images more visible. The thin red line disappears into a step at left. An eland image above the line touches the thin red line with the hoof of a hind leg.

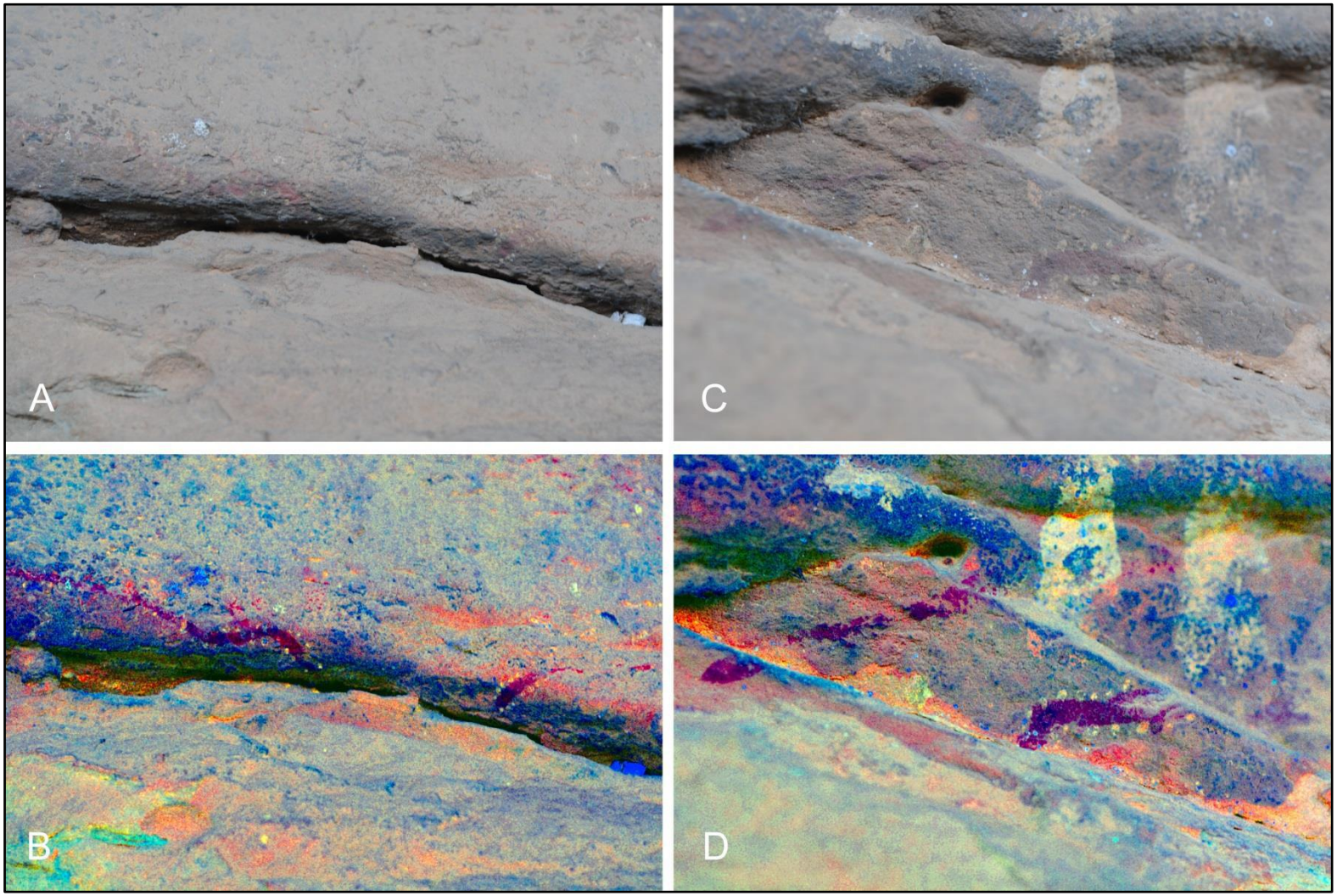


Figure 5.12. (A) A segment of the thin red line with white dots at MEL5 weaves in and out of cracks in the rock face. (B) A digital enhancement (DStretch©, LDS) of image A. (C) A segment of the thin red line at MEL5 comes into contact with the hooves of an eland. (D) A digital enhancement (DStretch©, LDS) of image C.



Figure 5.13. The thin red line motif at MEL3, where solid white lines, rather than dots, fringe a solid red line. A rhebok image stands with its forelegs on the line.



Figure 5.14. The legs of a human figure end without any feet at an edge (outlined) of the rock face at MEL14. Part of the figure is painted (but not contained) in a flake negative.

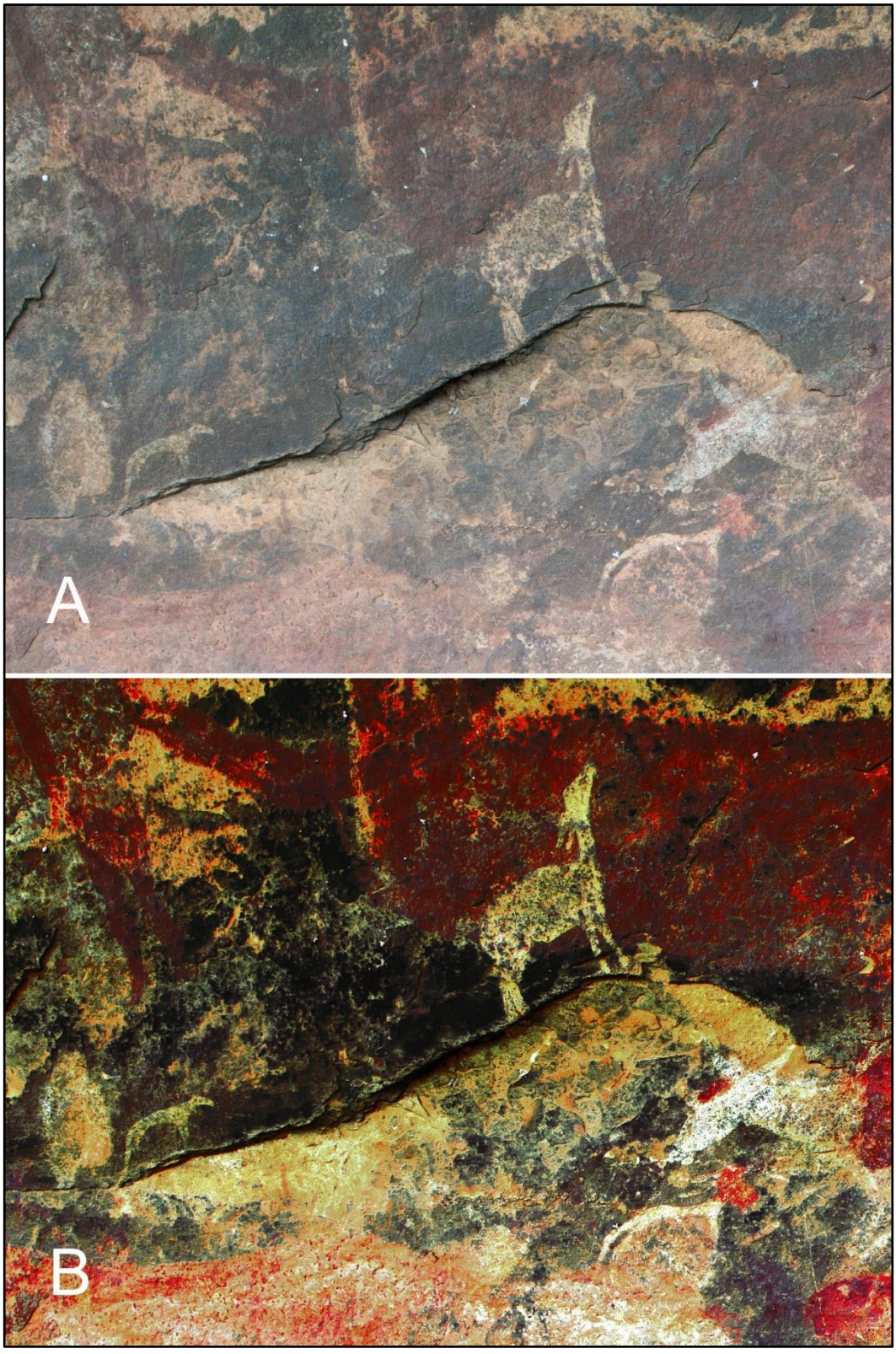


Figure 5.15. A rhebok painted as if walking along the edge of a step at MEL5. Note the small mongoose-like creature to the left of the rhebok. (A) Original photograph. (B) A digital enhancement of image A produced following procedure 2 in Appendix E.

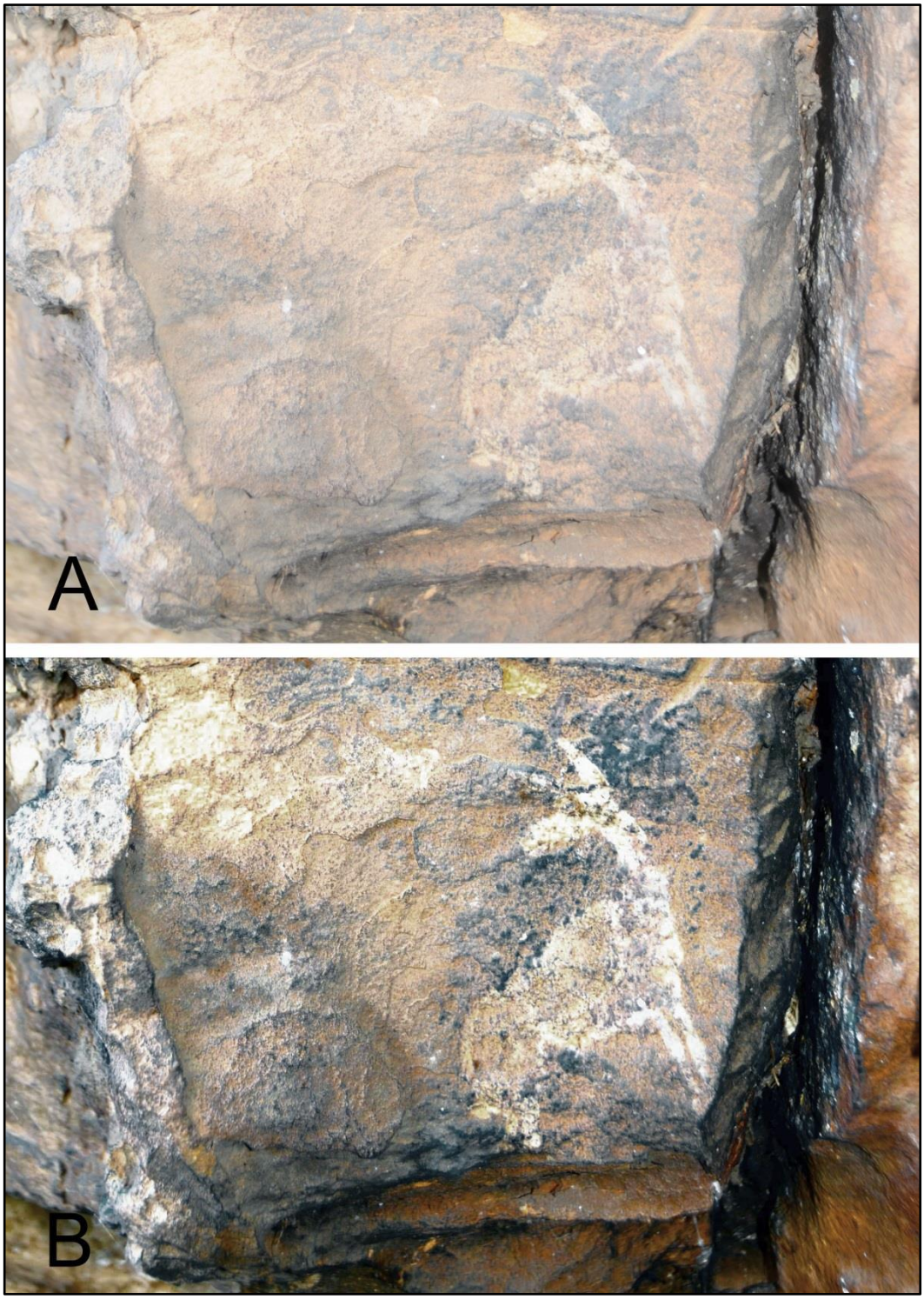


Figure 5.16. (A) Rhebok image at MEL1 painted in the corner of an angular raised area of the rock face. Neither pair of legs extends beyond the edges of the raised area of the rock face. (B) A digital enhancement of image A produced following procedure 2 in Appendix E.



Figure 5.17. A human figure painted over a step in the rock face at MEL4. It also overlies the blocky red body of an eland which, in turn, overlies the step.

5.2.3: Idiosyncratic uses of the rock face

Some uses of the rock face are idiosyncratic, as are some paintings (e.g., Dowson 1988, 1998). They 'exploit' the engagement with the three-dimensionality of the painted veil between worlds in novel, but not unprecedented, ways. As most images are in and of themselves stand-alone entities, Woodhouse (1990: 113–114, figs. 7, 8) gives as an example those images which incorporate hollows left behind after the weathering out of nodules.

A similar idiosyncratic example is found at MEL6. Though faint to the naked eye, the image in Figure 5.18 is a close up of feature 'v' in Figure 1.4: a quadrupedal animal at the bottom left of the panel. The image is remarkable in that its head, rather than being painted, is a hollow or negative in the rock face. Part of the animal is, therefore, an unpainted part of the rock face while the rest of the animal was 'brought through' by the image-maker. The image in Figure 5.18 is a testimony to how effortlessly image and rock face could blend together in numerous ways.

At two other sites, one on the MR and one in the valley north of it, several eland have been painted in a variety of perspectives apparently related to the slope of the rock face. While the slope of the rock surfaces in other areas of the site, and at other sites on the MR, are flat and perpendicular to the floor, the surface on the far right at MEL7 (Figure C.7) slopes outwards from top to bottom. On it, three eland are painted in the same colours and manner of depiction but from a variety of perspectives that imply the three-dimensionality of the rock face (Figure 5.19). Similar paintings of eland occur on a panel at MEL15 (Figure 5.20).

These somewhat idiosyncratic images are a further example of how painted interactions varied but did not do so uncontrollably. Interactions between the image and the rock face were of an established nature: though they allowed for variations in the hands of the image-maker *and* in the eyes of the viewer, they did not vary to the extent that they changed their nature. Rather, as with interactions at the trance dance (Chapter 3), they operated according to established and habitual ways of engagement with other social beings, the most important of which dwelt

in the spirit world.

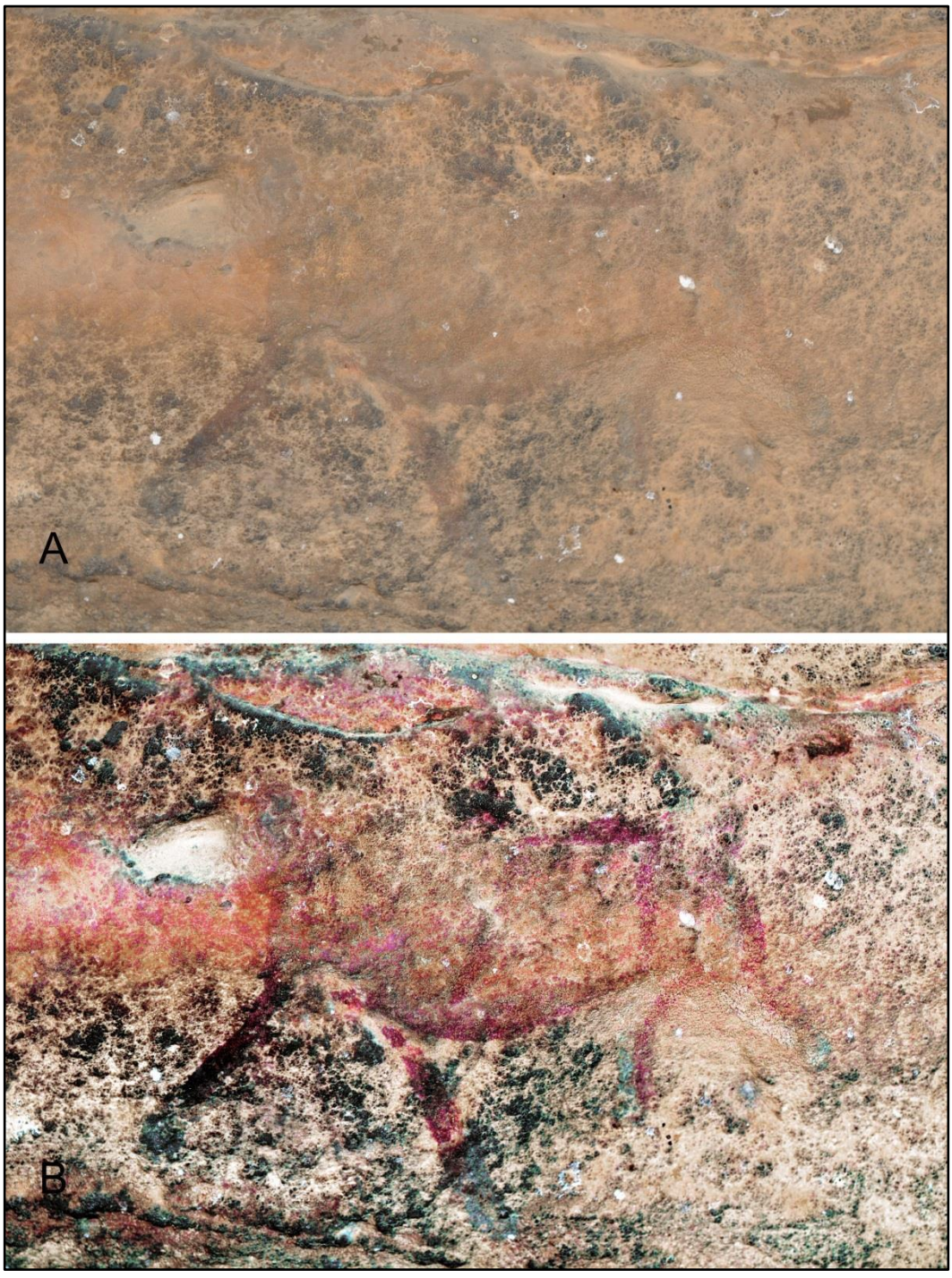


Figure 5.18. (A) Photograph of the quadrupedal animal at MEL6 with a hollow in the rock face for a head. (B) Digital enhancement of image A produced following procedure 1 in Appendix E (DStretch©, LRD).

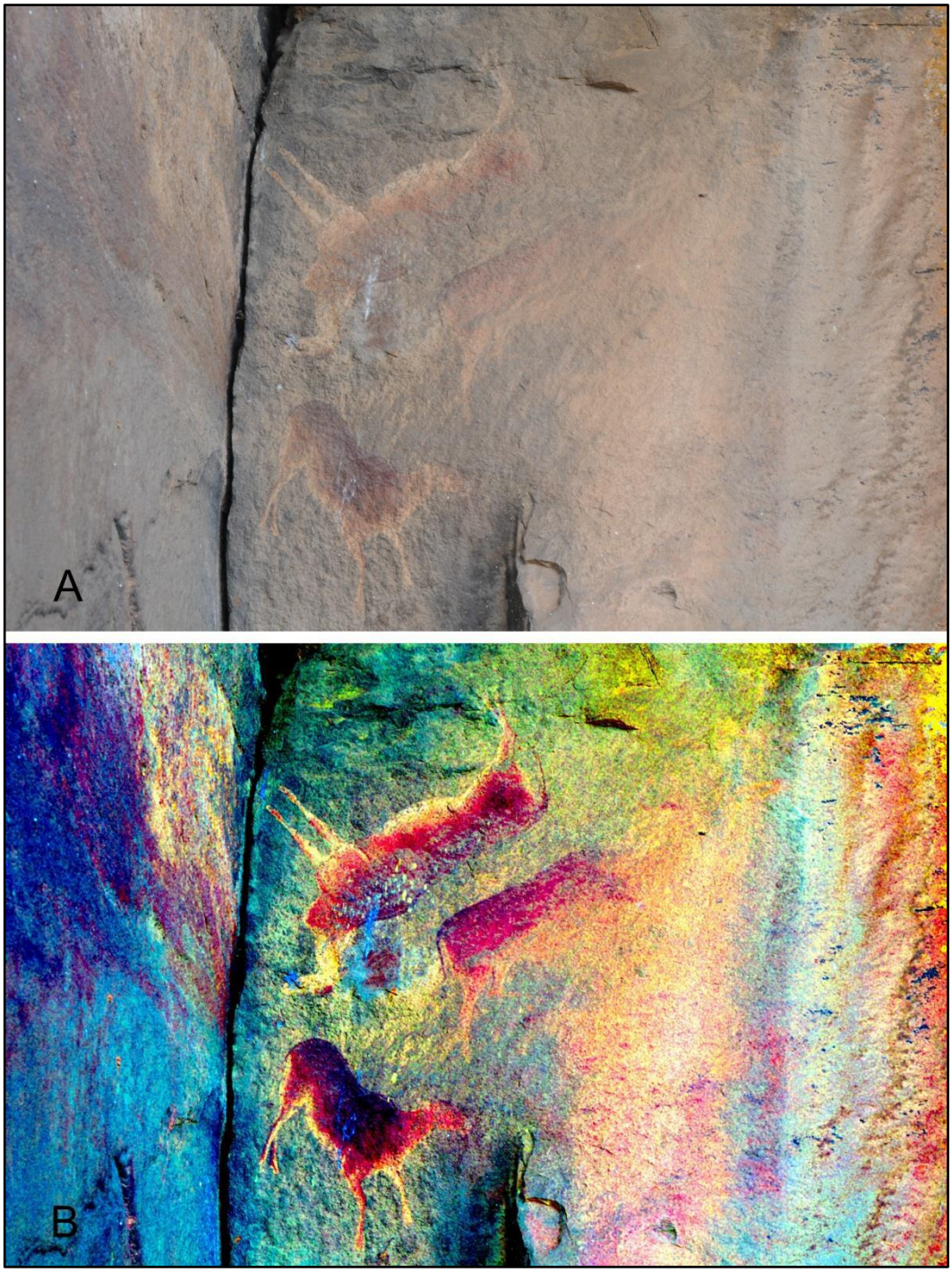


Figure 5.19. (A) Photograph of three eland at MEL7 painted from a variety of perspectives on a sloping surface. (B) A digital enhancement (DStretch ©, LDS) of image A renders the paintings more visible. Note the crossed hind legs of the top and bottom eland. The hind legs of the middle eland suggest that it is running.

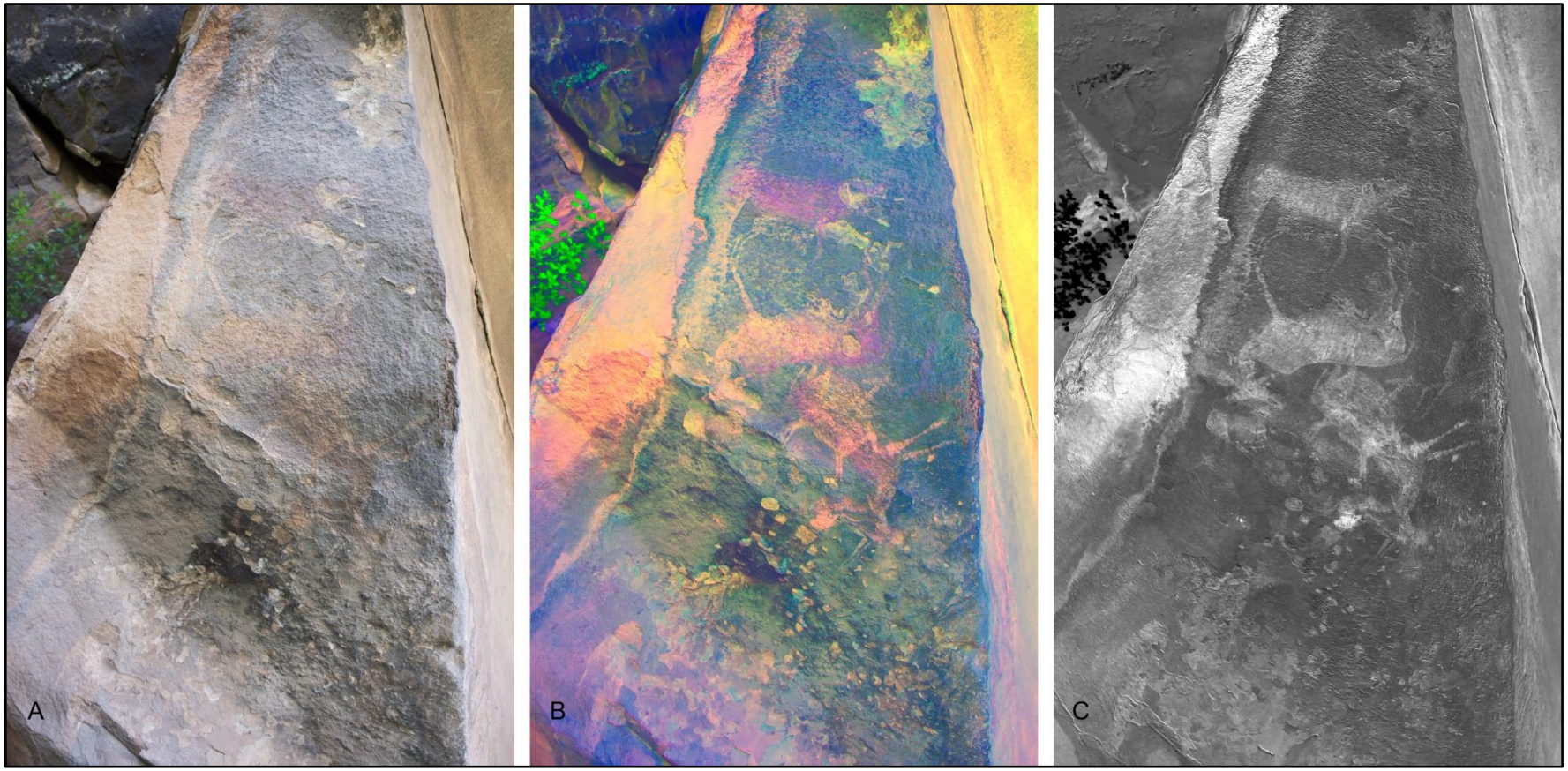


Figure 5.20. Images of eland and rhebok in a variety of perspectives on a sloping surface at MEL15. (A) Original photograph. (B) Digital enhancement of image A (DStretch©, YBK). Note the two upside-down eland and the central rhebok which appears to stand on a protruding lip of the rock face. (C) Digital enhancement of image A produced following procedure 2 in Appendix E (A-channel).

In sum, by interacting directly with the rock face, San images 'did' things. This activity carries a number of implications for interactions in which images are or were involved. I have so far referred only to the first kind of interaction—encompassing painters acquiring an image and painting it on the rock face. I ignored, however, many interactions that are implied by the MR images in an effort to discuss the most basic interactions between an image-maker, an acquired image, and a rock face. Multiplying those units, so that we speak in terms of image-makers, images, and rock faces, as well as other entities, increases significantly the complexity of the interactions that may occur. I come now, in turn, to each of the other four kinds of interaction between painters and images. In each case, we see further examples of how rock paintings *actively participate* in the performances of image-making[24].

5.3: Interactions between image-makers and images on the rock face

A second kind of interaction between painters and images is distinguishable when an image-maker makes an image while viewing, or recollecting, other images and in reference to other image-makers: *the new image is made in relation to pre-existing images, and can be painted with varying degrees of association to them.* The rock face often already contained 'fixed' images before new images were made, be they placed adjacent to or superimposed on the existing images, and painted either by one image-maker or more than one. With the addition of imagery in relation to pre-existing imagery comes a partially constraining effect on the kinds of new images that can or will be made and an amplifying effect resulting from the build-up in supernaturally-potent images and associations that result from the addition of new images (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 34).

Implicit in the interaction between images in relationships of superposition (e.g., Lewis-Williams 1972, 1974; Pager 1975), juxtaposition (e.g., Lewis-Williams

[24] Whilst I acknowledge the similarities between arguments I make for the active participation of imagery in terms of performance theory and the agency of art objects as articulated, for example, by Gell (1992, 1998), I nevertheless restrict myself here to performance studies and performance theory for the sake of theoretical coherence.

1981b: 8, 1984: 61–62; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2009: 54–55) and overpainting (e.g., Pearce & George 2011) is an interaction between different painters. Here, too, are at least two different, *but not mutually exclusive*, interactions related to the performance of the image-maker.

First is the interaction between a number of painters who made images together during the same performance and event: Silayi, a Thembu man who was a member for a time of a San group during the 19th century in Nomansland, witnessed the making of images and commented to W.E. Stanford that "[*t*]*hey* could paint very well" (Stanford 1910: 439, emphasis added), and we can here recall that Mapote had painted with his half-San stepbrothers and that "they used to paint at one end of a cave whilst the true Bushmen painted at the other" (How 1962: 33). The communality of other forms of San expressive culture, such as narrative storytelling, singing and dancing, as well as hunting (e.g., Barnard 1992; Biesele 1993; Guenther 1999; Hewitt [1986] 2008), suggests that much of San image-making was not necessarily a private and individualised activity, a point that has not received enough attention. The sheer numbers of images in some panels hint at the possibility that at least some large panels were communally constructed. Image-making owners-of-potency probably cooperated in the act of image-making, just as owners-of-potency cooperate in the performance of healing during communal trance dances and special curing ceremonies (Chapter 3).

The second interaction between different painters results from the fact that, unlike dances and songs *that only exist while they are performed*, rock paintings remain to be seen long after their human makers and viewers have moved away. Subsequent painters, much like viewers, are thus able to interact and engage with pre-existing imagery and, by implication, the previous image-makers. In distinguishing interactions between image-makers separated in time, it is necessary to accept that, in at least some cases, painters viewed and assessed the 'painted products' of previous performances, what Lewis-Williams & Blundell (1997: 53) termed the 'residues of ritual sequences'. In that sense, and as evidenced by superpositioning (e.g., Lewis-Williams 1974; Pearce & George 2011), an image-making performer was sometimes also an observer who

participated, after a delay of even 1000 years (e.g., see dates for TYN2-C6 and -C7 in Bonneau, Pearce *et al*. 2017), in a previous image-making performance.

A clear example of the direct interaction between two images and the implied interaction between two painters is the unusual case of overpainting at MEL7, where old images were not merely superimposed but were, in a sense, re-painted (Figure 5.21). The hind legs of the rightmost overpainting were deliberately painted to touch the rightmost end of the thin red line in Figure 5.11 (Figure 5.22).

A further example of superpositioning comes from MEL14 (Figure 5.23) where the image of a small antelope has been directly superimposed on a previous painting of another small antelope but faces in a different direction. The postures of the two antelope are somewhat different. The lower antelope is very faint. From what is visible, the animal is seated with its head raised in front of the body and off of the ground: only the red outline of the back and rear and some red on parts of the head have preserved (Figure 5.23). The colour of the superimposed antelope image is more vibrant. Its hind legs, painted in red, are in a seated position under the body, the front legs, painted in black (or perhaps a white that has now turned black), are stretched in front of the body, and the animal's head ends at the neck (Figure 5.23). It is not clear whether the head of the superimposed antelope disappears into a step in the rock face, or has flaked off. In any event, however, the second image was painted in relation to the first and directly on top of it.

A variation on this theme of interacting with images already on the rock face appears at MEL6 south (Figure 5.24), where a painting of a monochrome quadrupedal therianthrope with human legs echoes other, highly distinct and unusual (but not necessarily unique) images at a nearby panel: it is the only other painted image on the MR that recalls the painted quadrupedal therianthropes with human legs at MEL6 north (Figure 1.4)[25].

[25] A faint image of a feline therianthrope at MEL1 has human hind legs, but it does not resemble the therianthropes at MEL6 in other ways.

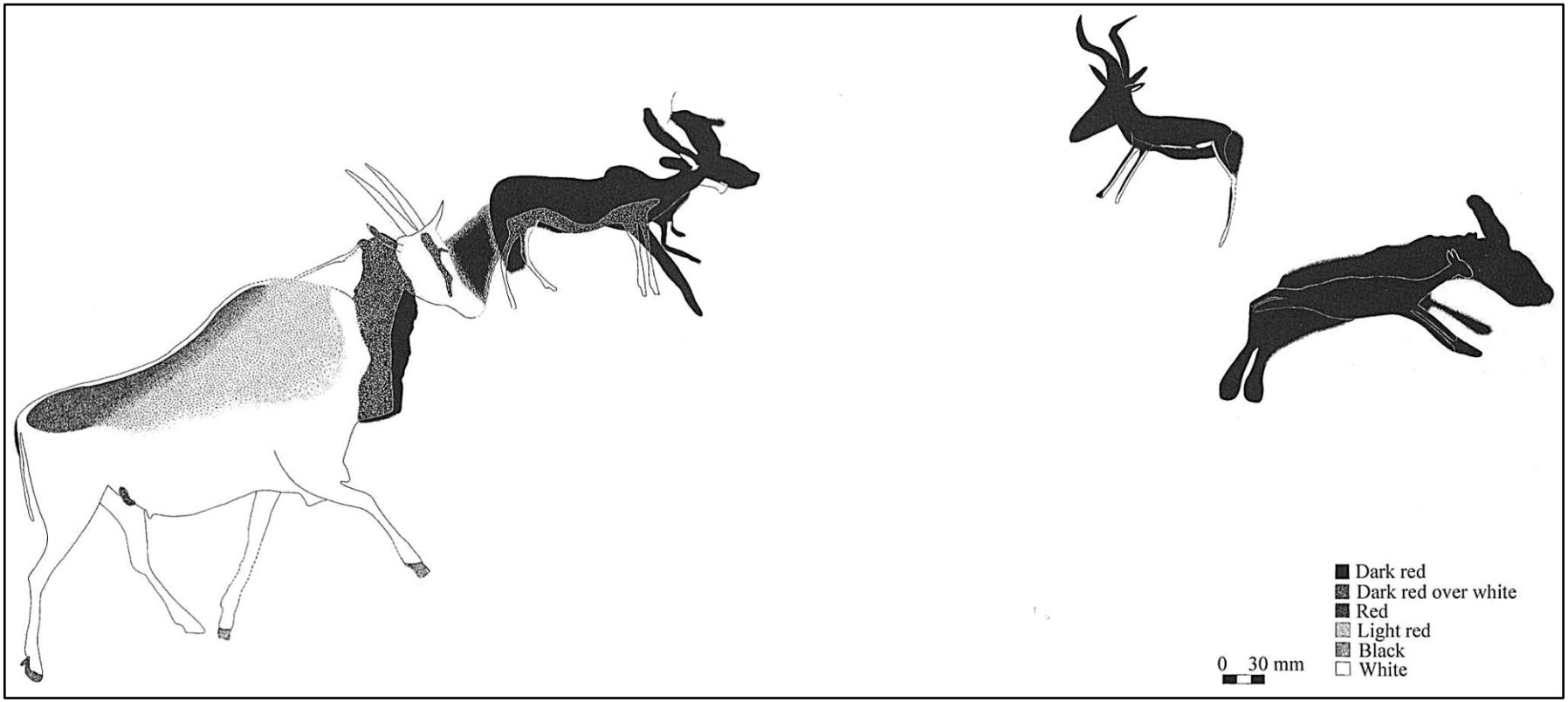


Figure 5.21. A redrawing of the overpainting at MEL7. The black areas represent the overpaintings. After Pearce & George 2011: fig. 3.

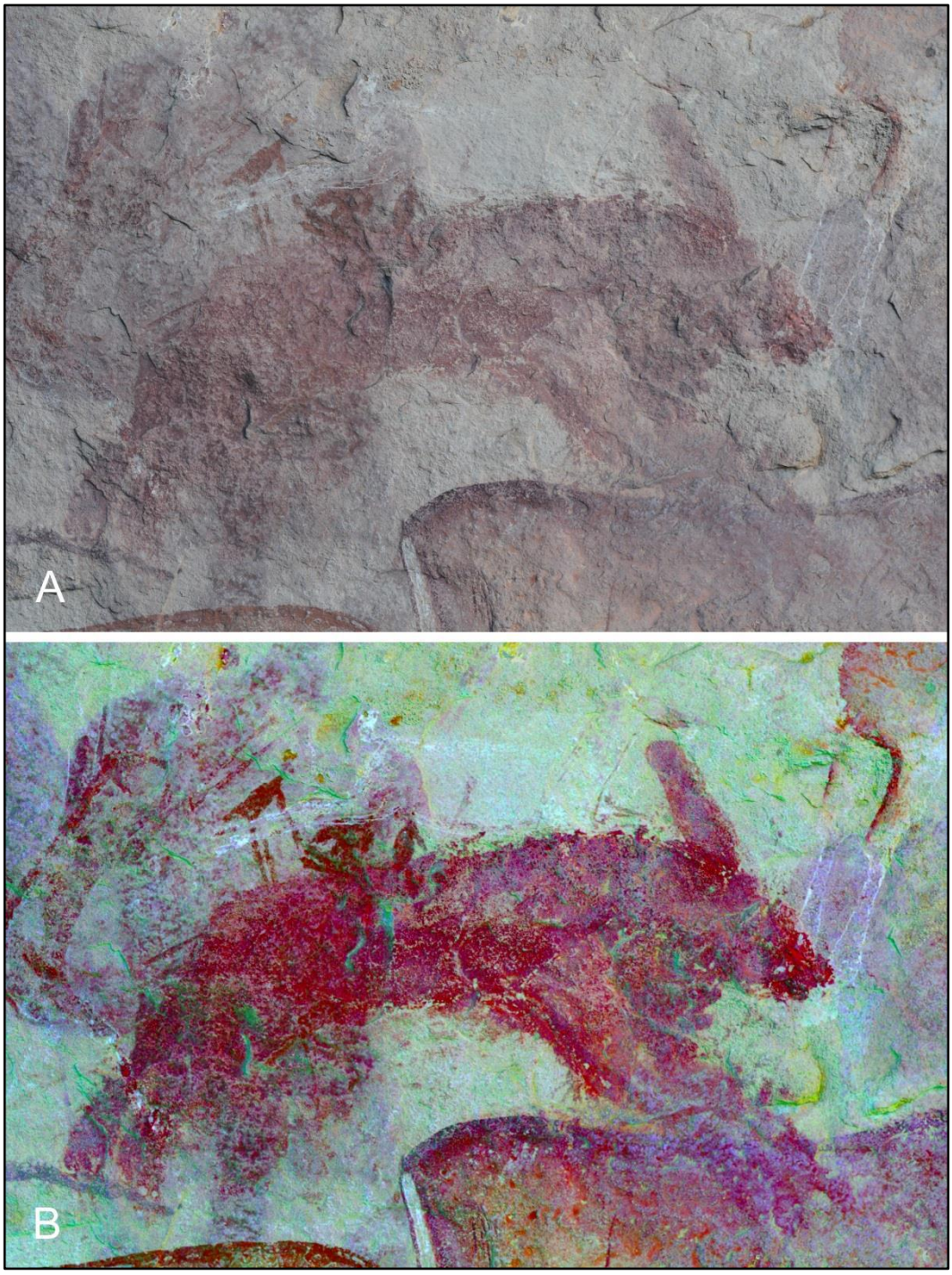


Figure 5.22. The rightmost overpainting at MEL7. The image has hind legs painted to make contact with the rightmost end of the thin red line at MEL7, just visible at the bottom left of image A and B. This segment of the line has no white dots. (A) Original photograph. (B) DStretch© (YRD) enhancement. The rhebok overpainted by the larger, more ambiguous red animal is just visible.



Figure 5.23. (A) Image of a red antelope facing viewer's left superimposed on an underlying and faint antelope facing right at MEL14. (B) A digital enhancement of image A, produced following procedure 1 in Appendix E (DStretch©, LDS), renders the neck and muzzle lines of the underlying antelope just visible. Note the human figure beneath the body of the red antelope.

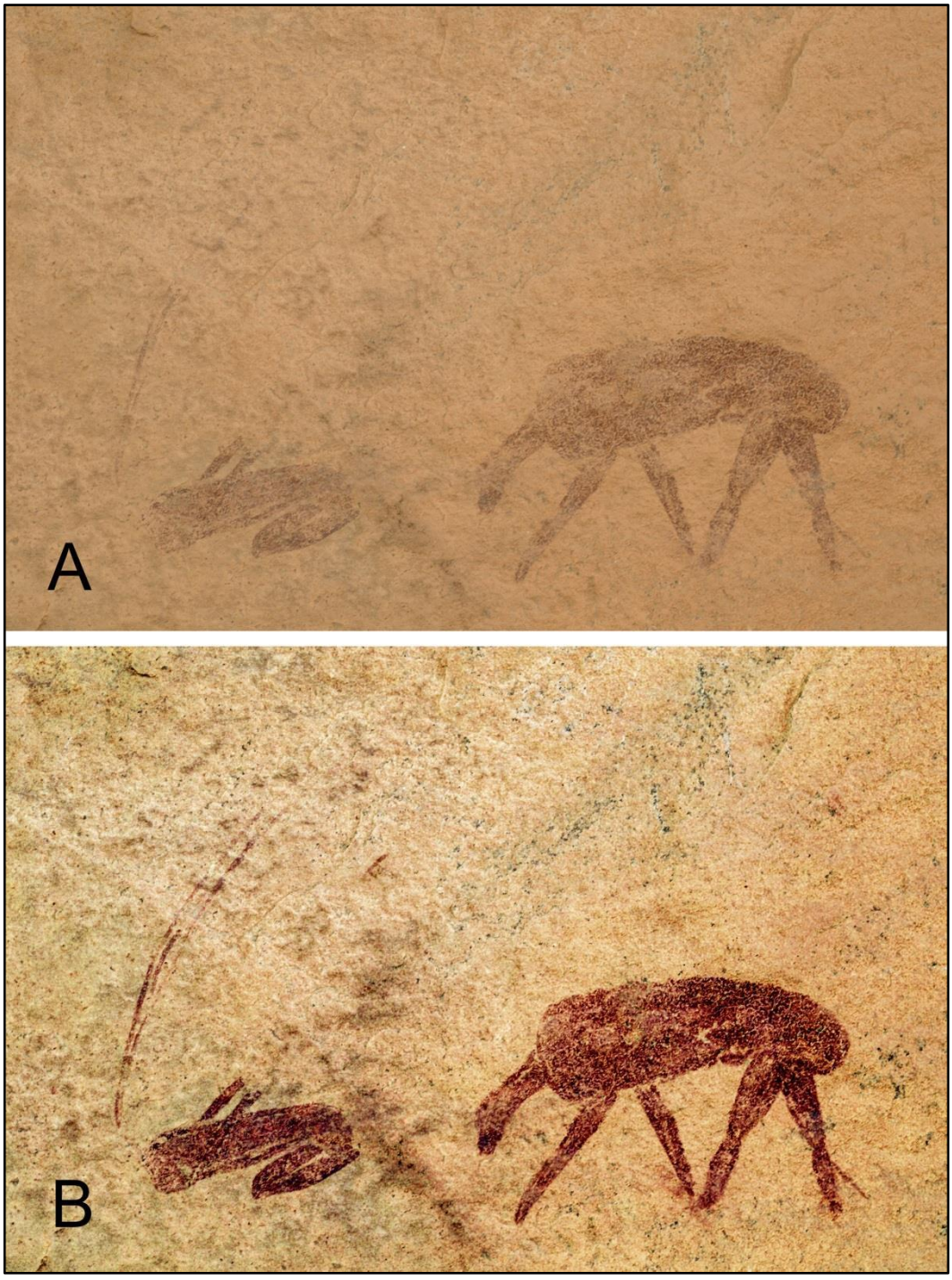


Figure 5.24. (A) Photograph of a quadrupedal therianthrope with human hind legs at MEL6 south, which echoes quadrupedal therianthropes with similar legs at MEL6 north. (B) Digital enhancement produced following procedure 1 in Appendix E (DStretch©, LDS). Note the lines which leave the kneeling human figure's head area.

It is conceivable that the images at MEL6 north were made later and recall the image at MEL6 south, but it is currently impossible to be sure of the direct temporal relationship between the images, as is indeed the case for any undated images. Still, whatever the temporal relationship, the differences in colour and manner of depiction suggest that image-making at one of the sites occurred with reference to pre-existing imagery at the other: an idiosyncratic motif was reproduced, not, so far as we know, on a large scale, but participated instead in the idiosyncratic imagery performed in a panel literally around the corner and only a few metres away.

5.4: Interactions between image-makers and animals

A third kind of interaction between painters and images is implied by scenes that apparently depict interactions between humans and animals. The importance of animals in the lives of foraging peoples has in recent years received renewed and revitalised attention on a global scale with the 'new animisms' (revising earlier forms of Tylorian animism) following the ontological turn in the social sciences. It is worth mentioning here because the new animism literature is receiving a growing amount of attention in studies of San ethnography and rock art (e.g., Dowson 2009; Guenther 2007, 2015, 2017; Low 2014; McGranaghan 2012; McGranaghan & Challis 2016). For the San, the relationships between humans and animals is well documented ethnographically and covers a wide range of contexts including the acquisition of potency for curing, specific observations when hunting, rites of passage, myth, and rock art (e.g., Lewis-Williams & Biesele 1978; Biesele 1993; Guenther 1999, 2007, 2015, 2017; Hewitt [1986] 2008; Dowson 2009; McGranaghan 2012; Low 2014). The polysemic symbolism of large game animals, especially eland, has been particularly well explored in the context of San imagery (e.g., Lewis-Williams 1998, 2001b).

San imagery depicting humans interacting with animals have been variously interpreted as sympathetic magic (e.g., Balfour 1909; Obermaier & Kühn 1930; Brentjes 1969; Thackeray 2005, but see Lewis-Williams 1982: 430, Vinnicombe 1972a, 1972b), transferral of supernatural potency (George 2013) and, most

recently, as ‘taming magic’(McGranaghan & Challis 2016). McGranaghan & Challis (2016: 592–593) summarise the conventional view of painted interactions between humans and animals as dealing, in some way, with the activation or transferral of supernatural potency—a view which they argue is likely to be incorrect. Human-animal interaction in the production of San imagery is especially interesting given that, in both northern and southern San ethnographies, animals can usefully be seen by the researcher as non-human persons that, in the context of hunting, require specific, appropriate behaviours to be performed toward them by the hunter and his kin so that, in reciprocating, the prey will allow itself to be hunted (McGranaghan & Challis 2016: 588, see also Low 2014; Guenther 2017).

Mark McGranaghan and Sam Challis (2016) detail how some San images reflect the activities of owners-of-potency who, by respecting a culturally-defined set of appropriate behaviours towards ‘wild’ animals, can ‘tame’ them, rendering the animal easier to kill. McGranaghan and Challis (2016) draw attention to the placation of ‘wild’ game animals (as well as the rain) through the performance of ‘nice’ behaviours and the use of ‘charms’ that allow the hunter to kill the animal.

This set of ‘taming’ behaviours, which draws on the |Xam ethnography as well as Qing’s commentary as related to Joseph Orpen, resemble strongly those that take place in M’s account of the killing of an eland and the making of medicine and paintings (Jolly 1986: 6). Their argument is remarkable in that they identify specific images related to specific tasks performed by particular kinds of owners-of-potency (McGranaghan & Challis 2016: 580). They “see (some instances of) rock-art production as part of a suite of ‘nice’ behaviours designed to inculcate or maintain desirable relationships between human and non-human persons” (McGranaghan & Challis 2016: 580)

Some of the more widespread motifs on the MR are most likely related to these specific interactions between humans and animals. Pointing figures, for example, are abundant across the ridge (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1999: fig. 19b, cf. Figure 5.27). Most of the MR sites with pointing figures (bar MEL6) appear on Leanne George’s (2013: table 1) otherwise complete list of sites at which different

categories of pointing occur. Most of these are concentrated in groups as part of panels at MEL7 and depict human figures pointing at wounded antelope (Figures 5.25, 5.26). Another kind of interaction with animals, probably a depiction of the use of placatory charms, is painted in a depression at MEL3 (Figure 5.5). Here, a human figure extends an arm holding (what is most likely to be) a bunch of plant charms to a standing antelope, probably a hartebeest, in order to placate it. Another human figure, which overlies the eland, has a bow drawn, but it is not unambiguously clear that an arrow is directed towards the antelope. A second hartebeest, on the right of the panel, is, however, seated and thus in a calm, placated state as if the placation has already happened.

McGranaghan and Challis (2016) argue that:

> rock-art depictions of 'taming' events may be seen as concrete manifestations of specialists' prowess, recalling Lewis-Williams and Pearce's (2004b) perspective on rock-art production as a form of symbolic labour that graphically demonstrated the unique skills of powerful shamans and displayed the perils they endured while fulfilling their roles (McGranaghan & Challis 2016: 594).

From the perspective of performance theory, 'taming magic' images may also be seen as *performing what they depict*, rather than only depicting what is or was performed. At least some images perform what they depict in the sense that, rather than only participating passively in image-making performances by recollecting or manifesting the prowess of owners-of-potency, and demonstrating their skills with supernatural power, the images, as powerful things-in-themselves transported from 'behind the rock face' but still 'fixed' to and interacting directly with the veil between worlds (Chapter 4), actively brought about some influence in the outcome of interactions with animals, such as in the outcome of a hunt. This outcome is in no small way related to the success of the image-making and hunting performances themselves. In this way, images used in 'taming magic' are implicated in the successful accomplishment of the owner-of-potency's task, an idea aligned with the argument in Chapter 4 that not all image-makers were equivalent owners-of-potency because, in this case, specialist 'taming' skills were required in the making of these images. Such a relationship implies that some of



Figure 5.25. Human-animal interaction at MEL7. An eland is bleeding from several wounds. The human figure on the right gestures towards the animal and, likely, placates it. After George 2013: fig. 15.

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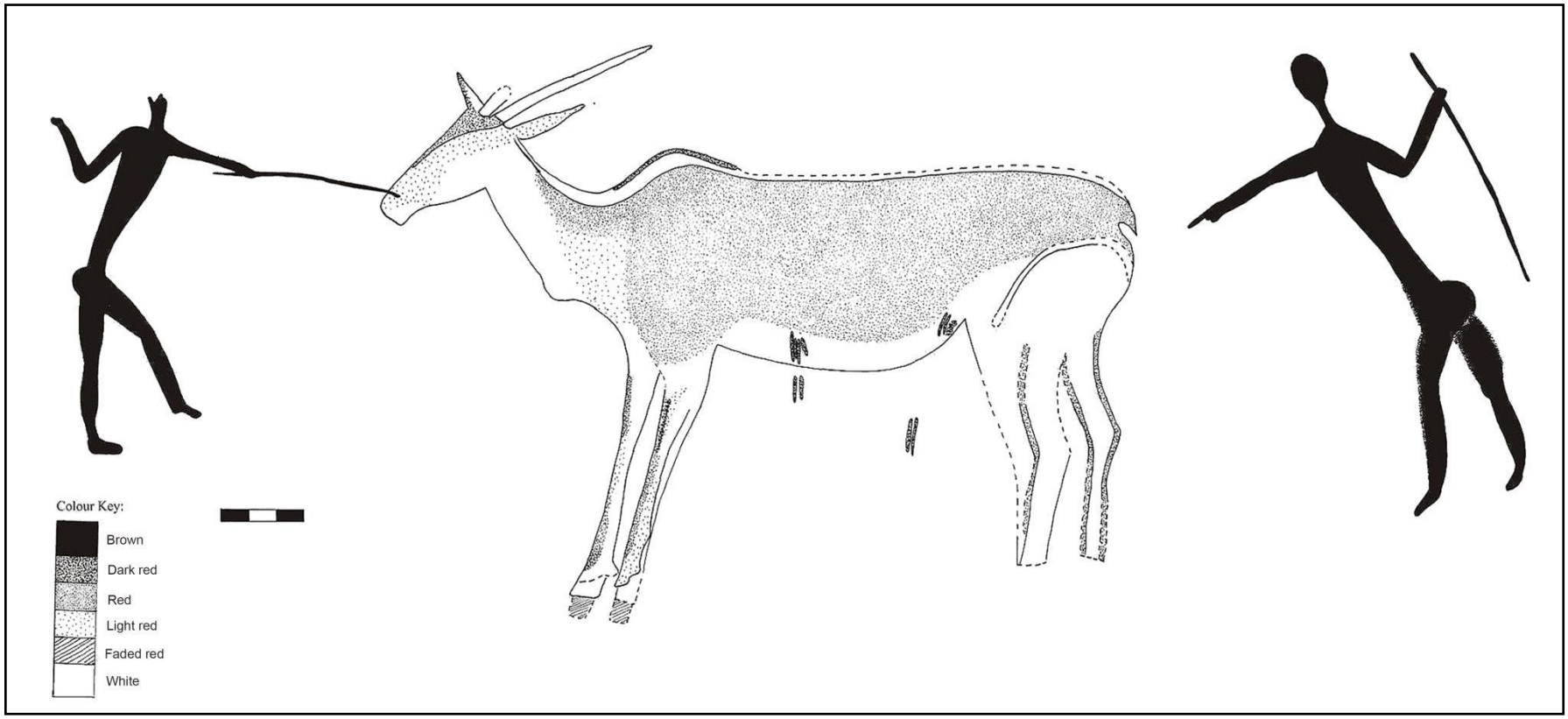


Figure 5.26. Two humans interact with a bleeding eland at MEL7. One touches it on the nose with a stick, the other points to it with an extended finger. After George 2013: fig. 16.

the variety of rock paintings reflects the variety of the tasks of the owners-of-potency and the ways in which they were achieved.

5.5: Interactions between image-makers and spirits-of-the-dead

A fourth kind of interaction between painters and images is implied by depictions in San painted imagery of spirits-of-the-dead. We have already encountered interactions between San owners-of-potency and spirits-of-the-dead in the discussion of the communal trance dance (Chapter 3). Though we discussed their relationship to living people, we did not focus on other qualities of these beings. The painted images of spirits-of-the-dead in Maclear and the surrounding areas, and on the MR in particular, are central to what is now a growing body of literature on depictions of spirits-of-the-dead in San rock art (e.g., Dowson 1994; Solomon 1997; Ouzman & Loubser 2000; Blundell 2004; Turner 2006; Johnson 2016), beginning with Dowson's suggestion that the 'clawed figures' in Figure 1.1 (see also Figure 5.29) should be identified as spirits-of-the-dead (Dowson 1994: 339). [26]

Spirits-of-the-dead are beings in San cosmology who, although they foray into the world of the living, dwell in another world and have a particular, if not globally definite, appearance that is related to the antisocial forces that they embody (Blundell 2004: 90–97). Ethnography of these beliefs about spirits is more abundant for northern San groups (e.g., Marshall 1962: 241–244; Silberbauer 1965: 102-104; Barnard 1979: 71–72; van der Westhuizen 1973; Marshall Thomas 1988: 136–137, see also Barnard 1992) than for southern San groups (e.g., Potgieter 1955: 18; Hewitt [1986] 2008: 28–30, see also Barnard 1992).

Generally, the spirits-of-the-dead are servants of the 'Greater' or 'Lesser' gods, tasked with inflicting death and disease upon the living. Their day-to-day behaviour and their role at the dance is chiefly antagonistic (e.g., Silberbauer 1965: 102; Marshall 1962: 244); the spirits-of-the-dead are, after all, the principal

[26] A redrawing of the lower figure in Figure 5.29A, one of the clawed and tusked figures, appeared on the cover of Issue 44, Volume 149 of *The South African Archaeological Bulletin*.

agents for introducing "death, disease and disorder" into the world of living people (Blundell 2004: 69).

Nevertheless, the spirits-of-the-dead are not regarded as entirely malevolent by all San peoples. In Ju|'hoan belief, as in most San groups, they are said to live with the 'Great god'. Some especially powerful owners-of-potency report having danced in the 'Great god's house' with these spirits. Biesele recorded an account, from Old Kxau, of how he had danced with spirits-of-the-dead who clapped and sang for him so that he could learn 'how to dance' (Biesele 1993: 70–72). Barnard (1979: 71–71) reports that for the Nharo, and unlike the Ju|'hoan approach to healing (Chapter 3), it is the *necessary cooperation* between a healer and one or more spirits-of-the-dead that is required to enter trance and successfully remove sickness during communal trance dances. For the G|wi, the spirits of departed old people are less dangerous than the spirits of children taken from the world of the living all too soon (Silberbauer 1965: 102). In the Bleek and Lloyd notebook material are accounts of deceased |Xam *!gi:ten* who, at the request from a living relative, aid in the accomplishment of supernatural tasks (Hewitt [1986] 2008: 215, 222).

Depictions of spirits-of-the-dead in the areas around and including the Maclear District have been most thoroughly investigated by Blundell (2004), who refers to examples of spirits-of-the-dead at MEL6, and beyond the MR at MEL9, MEL10 and other nearby sites. There are, however, relatively few depictions of spirits-of-the-dead on the MR itself. Those identified by Dowson (1994: 339) at MEL6 north agree with Blundell's (2004: 98–99) elaborated criteria for the identification of spirits-of-the-dead. From the painted images of spirits-of-the-dead on or near the MR, we may surmise that interactions with spirits-of-the-dead almost certainly existed because the shelters were places where the boundary between the living realm and the spirit realm was permeable (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990: 14).

Most important for this dissertation, however, is the observation that some paintings of spirits-of-the-dead "have features such as nasal blood and are in bending-forwards or arms-back-postures, clearly associating them with the [communal trance dance] and San shamanism" (Blundell 2004: 99). Indeed, *all* of

the painted spirits-of-the-dead at MEL6 are associated with the communal trance dance: a fact which readily recalls the presence of spirits-of-the-dead at communal trance dances (Chapter 3). In this way, images of dancing spirits-of-the-dead seem to evidence that the paintings recalled the experiences of trancing owners-of-potency and "proclaimed and, indeed, were palpable, tangible evidence for the shamans' access to spiritual realities" (Lewis-Williams 1994: 238) because these spirits cannot be seen by other people who, nevertheless, know they are there (Lee 1968: 45, 2003: 131; Marshall 1999: 88).

However, the role of *actual* spirits-of-the-dead in relation to *images* of the same on the MR is unclear. From the perspective of performance theory, the *presence* or *absence* (from a San perspective) of actual spirits-of-the-dead is the single most important consideration for a discussion of *interactions* between spirits-of-the-dead and San image-makers, and thus for the role that spirits-of-the-dead play in image-making performances. In the absence of either spirits-of-the-dead or image-makers, it is obvious that there cannot be any interaction.

A series of figures painted in white on a panel at MEL3 usefully develops this point (Figures 5.27, 5.28). Two of the figures in Figure 5.27 are painted in "a thin white pigment" that is somewhat translucent, which Blundell (2004: 98) describes as typical of images of spirits-of-the-dead images in the area, while a third figure is painted in a thicker, off-white pigment with "a slight reddish tinge", also characteristic of these figures (Blundell 2004: 98), and dances in a bending-forward posture and bleeds from the nose. This third figure has claws on his feet that recall the claws on the hands and feet of several of the figures at MEL6 (cf. Dowson 1994: 339; Blundell 2004: 98–99; Figure 1.1). The dancing figure in Figure 5.27 has unrealistically thin lower legs (that is, they appear skeletal and lack any muscular features that are typical of other kinds of human figures) and the pointing figure in Figure 5.28 is particularly thin with a head unlike that of a human and wears what appears to be a circular red earring.

Blundell's (2004: 98–99) criteria suggest that the figures depict spirits-of-the-dead. Nevertheless, it is unclear to what degree the image *is* that spirit-of-the-dead and not just a representation of it. When other kinds of images are discussed in the

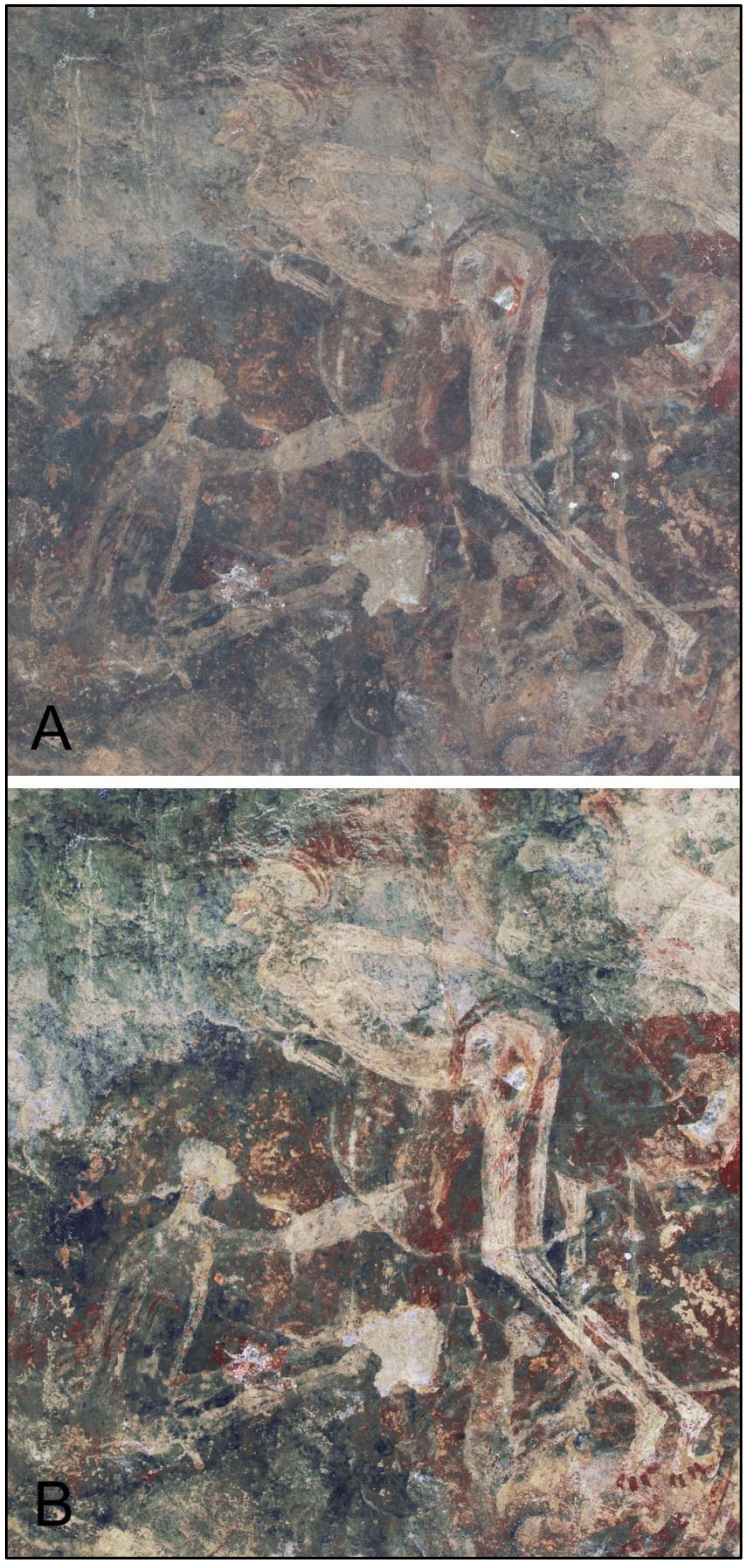


Figure 5.27. Spirits-of-the-dead at MEL3. (A) Original photograph. (B) A digital enhancement of image A produced following procedure 2 in Appendix E. Note the long red toes with white claws on the tall dancing man, and the flecks on the back of the seated figure to the left. There is a second translucent white figure in an 'arms back' posture just below the shins of the dancing figure. A redrawing of these images appears in Lewis-Williams and Dowson (1999: fig. 19b).



Figure 5.28. Black and white photograph of the other spirits-of-the-dead at MEL3.

literature, the 'being' of the image is acknowledged, or at least the images are seen as powerful 'things-in-themselves', rather than mere representations (e.g., Lewis-Williams 1994: 282, 2001a: 33; Lewis-Williams & Blundell 1997: 53). Yet the ontological status of *images* of spirits-of-the-dead seems less clear-cut. It is similarly unclear whether a painting of a spirit-of-the-dead visually recalls a previous experience of the image-maker, as might occur at a performance of the trance dance, or constitutes the experience itself—an interaction with that spirit—in the act of painting. At the simplest level, painting a spirit-of-the-dead may, in terms of San thought, be seen as interacting with a spirit-of-the-dead; there is no reason why we should assume that the San drew a strict distinction between images and actual spirits-of-the-dead.

At a larger scale, we may ask whether spirits-of-the-dead were, as at communal trance dances, in attendance for performances that took place at the rock face, where the emergence and disappearance of so many images suggest that the boundary between the world of the living and the world of the spirits was indeed permeable. Given the range of reasons (not necessarily within one San group) between benevolent and malevolent for which spirits-of-the-dead may be attracted to a performance of the dance, it is at least conceivable that, for at least one of these reasons, some images were viewed by spirits-of-the-dead who, like their human counterparts, could attend the actual image-making event or view the image after it was made *and* assess the image-maker's performance.

Nevertheless, spirits-of-the-dead are generally dangerous and engaging with them was something that only the owners-of-potency were equipped to do. Though it is unclear that spirits-of-the-dead were present during image-making performances, or during the viewing of and engagement with images, it is nonetheless impossible to ignore the fact that it is the owners-of-potency who are most likely to have made most, if not all, the painted imagery *and* that it is they who engage with the spirits at the communal trance dance. The exchange with the spirits-of-the-dead who have brought sickness and taken away loved ones is highly dangerous: owners-of-potency only aggressively insult or reprimand the spirits in *!aia when they are at the height of their activated potency*. By implication, if

dangerous, antagonistic, unfamiliar spirits-of-the-dead were present during the making of images, then the situation would have been similarly dangerous. But, as we have seen, as not all spirits-of-the-dead are necessarily antagonistic—particularly the spirits of recently deceased kin—some spirits-of-the-dead may have aided the image-maker supernaturally in the success of his or her image-making performance (e.g., Barnard 1979: 71–71; Hewitt [1986] 2008: 215, 222). We can be sure that, if making images related to a specific task of the image-making owner-of-potency, then the nature of that task determined whether or not and with which spirits-of-the-dead would have been engaged.

5.6: Interactions between the viewers and the images

A fifth and final interaction necessary to consider is that between the painted image and non-image-makers. We have already seen, in Chapter 4, how images are reservoirs of potency that can be engaged with after the making of the image. I discussed the *use* of the images as either in relation to the immediate making of the image, which I termed use-in-the-act, or at a remove from the immediate event, which I termed use-after-the-act. From the perspective of performance theory, it is important in both cases to recognise that interactions between images and 'viewers' or users depend largely on the degree of familiarity or alterity between the two.

We can distinguish two kinds of implied interactions between painted images and 'viewers' or users of those images. These arise when a viewer gazes upon an image, either (1) during the image-making performance as it is being painted or (2) after the image-making performance and thus at an existing painted image. In the first case, the viewer is an *immediate participant* in the contingent process of image-making. I return to this point in Chapter 6. In the second case, the viewer is a *delayed participant* who is an observer, and can view, assess, and engage with the painted image.

When assessing a painted image, the viewer is not an *active* participant in a performance. An ethnographic example of assessment, which is applicable to both cases, is seen in Silayi's response to W.E. Stanford's question: "Where did they

get the material with which the caves are painted? [Silayi:] It was taken out of the ground. Some kinds were prepared at the fire. *They could paint very well*." (Stanford 1910: 439, emphasis added).

The making of images such that others could see and assess them was, in that sense, a display of the acts or experiences of the owners-of-potency during their various tasks encompassed in ideas about symbolic labour and the access that owners-of-potency had to spiritual realities that others did not (Lewis-Williams 1982, 1994: 238, 2001a: 29; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2004a, 2004b). In this way, the images can be said to have a function that was very similar to the verbal recollections of healers following a trance dance which confirmed and elaborated on the actual performance of the communal trance dance openly attended by everyone (e.g., Biesele 1993: 76–77). This function alone, however, seems to leave unexplained what image-making 'did' that verbal communications about, or witnessing, the same events could not.

Physically engaging with an existing painted image, either as recounted by M (Chapter 4), or by removing some of the pigment, drew on the reservoir of potency that *is* the image. In this way, the viewer participated in the performance that created the image, though it was *delayed* relative to when the image was made. The interaction also *initiated a new, second performance* in which the interaction with the paintings took centre-stage: the 'viewer' who physically engaged with the painted image was a performer, who engaged with the supernatural potency of the images in order to acquire it, either for themselves or, more likely, on behalf of and for a wider group as part of a larger ritual process.[27] Material evidence for examples of this sort of interaction are found at MEL7, where the painted rock surface has been rubbed smooth (Figure 4.4), at MEL5 (Figure 4.3) and also at MEL6 (Figure 5.29).

Outside of the contexts in which San rock art images are understood relative to

[27] From the perspective of performance theory, it is possible to treat M as a keen performer demonstrating her knowledge and skills during her interviews with Jolly, Lewis-Williams and Prins, and to see the interviewers as participants in her performance (cf. Jolly 1986; Lewis-Williams 1986, 2001a: 43).

San beliefs and idiom, a different kind of interaction is seen in the defacing of rock art or the placing of graffiti at rock art sites (Figures 5.29, 5.30) where the images are engaged with from a position of cultural alterity.

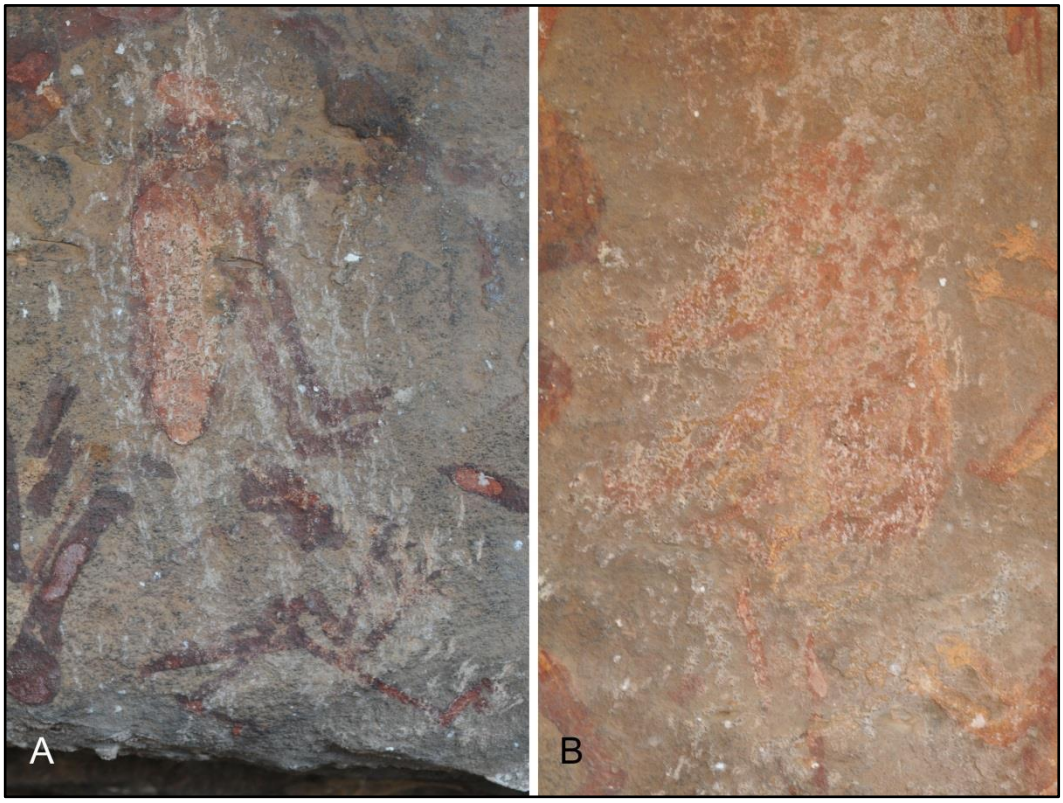


Figure 5.29. Abraded painted spirits-of-the-dead from Figure 1.1 (MEL6). None of the other human figures have been damaged in this way. (A) Two figures from the left-hand group. (B) A figure from the right-hand group.

5.7: Summary

Images are able to participate in interactions because they are not passive. In terms of performance theory, it is important that we recognize that the rock paintings on the MR are not painted 'as if' they were engaged in interactions—'as if' standing on a step, 'as if' entering the rock face—rather, they *are*, in fact, engaged in the interactions that they depict (cf. Schechner 2013: 38–40). At every painted shelter there are interactions of one kind or another with the highly

significant veil between worlds. Images actively engage with the rock face they



Figure 5.30. (A) Defaced images at MEL4. All of the male figures are erect. An attempt has been made to obscure the phalluses.

are painted on, in some cases, appearing and disappearing. The use of features in the rock face, such as depressions, cracks, steps, edges, and hollows, in the making of San rock art, focused on specific kinds of engagements with the veil between worlds. Even when painted on flat and apparently unremarkable surfaces, images depict people, animals and other entities *in action*. The variety of ways that these features were employed suggests that the ways that image-makers chose to engage with them depended on the kind of image being painted and, by implication, the type of task being performed—not limited to rain-control, game-control and healing. These images in action allow us to consider the ways in which images participate in the performances of image-making. Interactions are not limited to the rock face. Paintings imply a suite of interactions such as those between the image-makers and other people, between people and animals, as well

as other entities such as the spirits-of-the-dead.

The variety of interactions, which overlap in places on the MR, parallels the overlapping tasks performed by overlapping categories of southern San owners-of-potency (Hewitt [1986] 2008: 213). These interactions were part of image-making performances that were, I argued, contained on the MR, where the boundary between worlds was permeable. The containment of images in sites along the MR and the use of features of the rock face show a selectivity of certain spaces and a placement of images and modes of interaction with the sprit realm.

The variety of interactions suggest that relationships between different images and between images and features of the rock surface were not random, rather they were deliberately and decidedly depicted by specific image-makers as part of image-making performances that were related to the activities of the owner-of-potency who painted them. What may appear to later viewers as a random scatter of unrelated images was, for the San, a result of non-random, deliberate placing of images according to a set of conventions that derived from the diverse activities of owners-of-potency. Like the dance, which is brought on by multiple factors in a variety of situations, it is conceivable that the making of images, too, was brought on by a variety of factors, but would, as with the communal trance dance, nevertheless have been implicated in a network of social relations and a meeting of two different worlds in a performative and almost certainly ritualised context. Containing certain performances was socially important and was tied to specific people, spirits and animals. Keeping these interactions in mind, the nature of image-making performances is explored further in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

6.1: Sheltered performances

By approaching the MR images from a performance perspective, I have aimed to bring new insights and open new doors for the investigation of the overall practice of San image-making. In the preceding chapters, I have focused, at various points, on ethnographic, documentary, and material evidence for the performance of image-making and have reviewed literature that has contributed to our current understanding of this practice. We now have an idea of how interactions in the painted MR imagery are likely to parallel interactions in other San performances, with particular focus on those at the trance dance (Chapter 3). Nevertheless, what happened when a San rock painter 'fixed' an image to the rock face remains almost entirely unknown. We can, however, be sure that the making of rock paintings was part of a series of socially significant ritualised events (Chapter 4) and that images were involved in socially significant interactions at the MR rock faces (Chapter 5). I have shown that different kinds of interactions on the MR give meaning and power to the process of image-making and to the results of the process, that is, to the images themselves. We have also seen that the painting process does more than merely recollect past experiences or manifest the prestige of powerful owners-of-potency. The performance of image-making is likely to have been important in and of itself as a means to accomplish specific ends. I now turn to the characterisation of San image-making performances on the MR before coming to four (though not exhaustive) implications that follow from a classification of the practice of image-making as performative.

6.2: The criteria for image-making performances

Though the MR images are involved in interactions, those interactions *alone* are

not sufficient to warrant a classification of image-making as a performance. In order to speak of the practice of San rock art in terms of performance, the practice must be shown to be classifiable as such by meeting several criteria. The following characteristics, shared by all performances, were introduced in Chapter 2:

- "[A] *performance* is an activity done by an individual or group in the presence of and for another individual or group" (Schechner 1988: 29, emphasis added). Either side (performers or 'audience') may be composed of gods or spirits.

- Performances involve the *display* of a behaviour or action by performers (e.g., Carlson 1996: 4–5).

- Other people *assess* that display of action (e.g., Carlson 1996: 5).

- Performances have the potential to go wrong and are *not risk-free* (e.g., Schieffelin 1998).

- Performances always do something, and therefore always *accomplish something* (e.g., Schieffelin 1998: 198).

These criteria allow us to begin *characterising* the making of San imagery as a performative practice—without, at this point, adding anything about the *nature* of the performance itself. The following points summarise and, importantly, coordinate, the practice of San rock art in terms of performance.

- Image-making is a performance because it is an activity in which images are made, principally, by one primary group of image-making owners-of-potency on behalf of and for persons other than the image-makers (Chapter 4).

- The image-making owners-of-potency are, for the most part and until otherwise demonstrated, the performers.

- As at the communal trance dance and special curing ceremonies (Chapter

3), image-making involves not *only* the visual display of painted imagery but *also* the display of the skill and experience that owners-of-potency have with supernatural potency. Both the fleeting act of making the image *and* the painted image itself (which remains on the rock face) are displays.

- By implication from the characteristics of performance (Carlson 1996: 5), San ethnography, and San rock art, the displays were assessed by persons, human and otherwise, who could view, interact and engage with the rock paintings.

- By implication, image-making performances must have contained elements of risk in that the performance might not have brought about the desired result, or the owners-of-potency could fail to accomplish socially significant tasks and be judged with negative implications. This aspect of performances in San image-making is a hitherto unexplored area of the image-making process that I return to later in this chapter.

- By implication from the characteristics of performance (e.g., Schieffelin 1998: 198), San ethnography, and San rock art, image-making activities were involved in the accomplishment of various tasks faced by owners-of-potency.

Unlike the gestures, postures, and songs at a performance of the communal trance dance, which exist only in the moment that they are performed, rock paintings remain on the rock face for an extended period. The elements of performance thus need not necessarily be simultaneous: an image may have been made when no other people were present, and then assessed at a later point. There is, then, a need to consider the possibility of more open-ended performances where rock art is concerned, not least because the viewing and assessment of rock paintings to potentially occur well after its making, and either in a 'San context' or from a point of cultural alterity. Assessment of San rock art images was, at least in some cases, unpredictable and dynamic in the long term.

The above summary of image-making performances outlines, in broad terms, why

San image-making (and, indeed, viewing) are parts of performances and what the other parts of such performances comprise. Being characterised as a performance is, however, not enough if we wish to build on the current understanding of the multi-stage and social practice of San rock art (e.g., Lewis-Williams 1994, 1995, 2001a). As a rough sketch of the performative characteristics of San rock art practice, the summary does not consider the small-scale details of individual interactions that take place during a single performance nor does it have the scope to contrast similarities with differences or assess the performativity of image-makers. These aspects relate to the *nature* of the performance; it is necessary to go further in order to investigate that nature and how it affects social relations. This understanding can then form the basis for understanding the social significances and implications of image-making.Though some of these topics were touched on in previous chapters, I focus in the rest of this chapter on elaborating and problematizing the nature of San image-making performances so that the full implications of the application of performance theory to San rock art might be realised.

6.3: Who actually made the images?

A first implication which follows from the characterisation of image-making as performative addresses the following question: who were the principal image-making performers? This is a key issue because images, if they are not akin to Western art, must have had a particular ontological status within San worldview. Rock paintings cannot be disconnected from the web of interactions that I discussed in Chapter 5. Lewis-Williams's (1994, 1995, 2001a) four stages of the ritualised production and consumption of imagery are the frame in which performances of San rock painting and viewing should be addressed. As we have seen, in that process, image-making owners-of-potency acquire and 'fix' images to the rock face.

There is, however, a problem facing the relationship between image-makers and their images. The role of the image-making owner-of-potency in a performance of image-making is complicated by comments in San ethnography that suggest that

other entities made, or at least had a role in the making of, the images. This is not surprising: we have already encountered an example of god-given images in the idiosyncratic description of trance experience from a blind San healer in Chapter 3 (Katz 1973: 141).

In 1911, Dorothea Bleek (notebook A3 004: 188, cited in Lewis-Williams 2015a: 171) recorded a note from |Xam descendants who said that "|Kaggen makes the pictures". Then, years later, when conducting fieldwork among northern San groups she wrote that:

> At certain points along the ridge which divides the [≠Au||eisi] and [Nharo] there are rock engravings of patterns and animals. Some are exceedingly old, others less weather-worn. I have seen them at Babibabi about half an hour's walk from Mr van der Spuy's house, and have been told there are many at Tsachas not far from the watering place. Neither [Nharo] nor [≠Au||eisi] knew anything about them. Only one or two had seen them and these were inclined to echo the [Damaras'] prompt verdict that they were the work of [||gauwa]. Certainly neither tribe knows anything about painting or chipping to-day (D. Bleek 1928: 41, parentheses give modern group names and spellings).

Bleek's sentence is paradoxical in that she states that two groups knew nothing of the engravings but that some people (presumably from those same groups) did, perhaps, know of the engravings, or that they were willing to guess. It is further unclear from Bleek's (1928: 26) sentence, and her earlier questions, whether ||*gauwa* should here be read as a reference to a singular 'spirit-of-the-dead', or as a reference to the Lesser god.

Nevertheless, San groups who live in the region of the Tsodilo Hills have similar beliefs:

> The !Kung do not paint, having indeed few surfaces on which to paint; they are, however, aware of the existence of rock paintings in the Tsodilo Hills: they believe that the great god, Gaoxa, put them there. One !Kung woman said that if Gaoxa had not painted the pictures, it must have been the Tsaukwe, a San group living to the south east of the !Kung area (Lewis-Williams & Biesele 1978: 123).

> Today, !Kung people living at Tsodilo attribute the paintings to the great god. When pressed, they say that on their first arrival at Tsodilo sometime after 1850, and having come from Nxaunxau on the Namibian border, they found the Hills settled by Ncae, Khoe-speaking people. The Ncae told them that their ancestors were responsible for the art, *the god having guided their hands as they held the pigment to form pictures on the rocks*. The Ncae took them to a certain panel on Child Hill and told them that this panel was the most important of all the paintings, since it still 'worked' for them (Campbell *et al*. 1994: 155, emphasis added).

That several different San groups, including one southern and three northern (as well as the Damara and the Ncae[28]), made similar comments about both painted and engraved images suggests that it is unlikely that the comments merely express an ignorance of who made the images and that 'only God knows'. Attributing images to |Kaggen, the Greater or the Lesser god, is reminiscent of ideas about 'possession', recalling a Ju|'hoan expression recorded by Marshall (1962: 236) that the Great god "has power over all these things, so he possesses them".

Concepts in San ethnography suggest that the comments on the making of images by |Kaggen, or the Greater or Lesser god, might express a notion of the owner-of-potency as a conduit for supernatural potency. Ju|'hoan owners-of-potency say that their *n|om* and their curing ability comes from *≠Gao N!a* (Marshall 1969: 352, cf. Marshall 1962: 227)—echoing the Ncae beliefs about "god having guided their hands" (Campbell *et al*. 1994: 155).

Biesele (1975: 173) records a remarkable song text from a Ju|'hoan man, known as Jack, who, unlike other healers who approach *!aia* through the communal dance, entered trance through the playing of a thumb piano:

> his fingers had in them the power that descended from God's arms, and that when he played the [thumb piano] it was really God playing. A strong idea, but simple enough. For a !Kung listener, however, this phrase 'God's arms' is an extremely powerful one in and of itself. (One is reminded here of early English swearing.) For the !Kung it is an oath of such potency that people enjoin each other from ever saying it (Biesele 1975: 178).

[28]Walker (2010: 54) notes that the Ncae are Khoe-speaking forager-herders.

Among the |Xam, the spirits of deceased *!gi:ten* aided in the control of rain and influencing the behaviour of game animals (Hewitt [1986] 2008: 215, 222), and Nharo healers cooperated with spirits-of-the-dead in the removal of sickness (Barnard 1979: 71–71). I follow Lewis-Williams (2001a: 32) in suggesting that despite the virtual absence of the practice of rock art in the ethnographic present between 1911 and 1994 when the statements quoted above were recorded by Bleek, Lewis-Williams and Biesele, and Campbell and colleagues, the statements hint at certain people who 'received', supernaturally, particular images and/or the capacity and ability to paint—an idea fully in line with the San worldview. Given other details of San ethnography on the making and viewing of images (Stanford 1910; How 1962; Jolly 1986; Lewis-Williams 1986), it seems extreme to deny the owners-of-potency all agency and throw the 'medium out of the séance'. It is, therefore, most likely that the image-making owners-of-potency were responsible for much, if not all, of the painted images: they acted as conduits for supernatural potency and the manifestation of images. Their image-making formed part of their social roles which drew on their skills and knowledge of supernatural potency—particularly in terms of healing, rain control and the influencing of game animals—which they mobilised on behalf of their community and with respect to social relationships in that community.

6.4: The ritual of image-making performances

A second implication in the characterization of image-making as a performance is that the performance is likely to have been of a type that resembled performances that *have* been observed and documented. We should, therefore, be able to classify image-making performances as one kind or another. The observance of image-making owners-of-potency in action is, today, impossible. Problematically, we cannot attend the actual performance and witness it first-hand. We are, therefore, limited, in the context of performance theory, to a *reconstruction* of what happened during the making of a San rock art image and afterwards by drawing implications, both from documentary sources and observations of the painted imagery (cf. Lewis-Williams 1994, 1995, 2001a). The lack of information available for such a reconstruction must, however, be contextualised by those few

documentary sources which inform our understanding of the practice and process of rock art images. All the sources that we do have suggest that much for the process behind the production and consumption of San painted imagery was ritualised (Chapter 4).

We may recall from Chapter 2 Victor Turner's distinction between, on the one hand, liminal performances, which mark *permanent social transformations*, and, on the other hand, liminoid performances, in which participants may undergo non-permanent transformations and are *transported* from one circumstance to another and return to the original circumstance at the end (Turner 1974, 1985: 296). Within such a scheme, how might we categorise image-making performances?

Some rock art researchers, most recently John Kinahan (2017a, 2017b) and Jeremy Hollmann (2017), have argued for the role of southern African hunter-gatherer rock art in rites of passage. Such rituals lack support in the Maloti-Drakensberg (e.g., Lewis-Williams 1981a) but appear to be evidenced in the rock art of Namibia and some engraved traditions in South Africa. In such a liminal performance, the art is part of a process of social transformation where a person A goes through process X and becomes B (Figure 6.1).

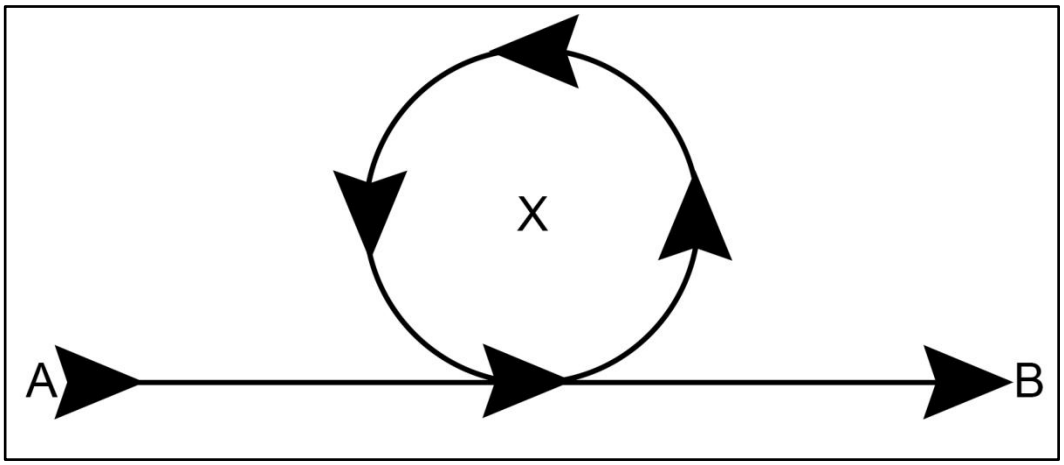


Figure 6.1: A schematised liminal ritual in which a social transformation takes place.

MR image-making performances were not, as far as is it possible to tell from the imagery itself, related to rites of passages. MR image-making, as we have seen in Chapters 4 and 5, related to the supernatural activities and symbolic labour of owners-of-potency which were performed on behalf of and for a larger group. Image makers moved between realms with the making of an image but such interactions did not permanently change their social categories or ontological status. Even novices who were learning to become masters did so cumulatively and did not suddenly change their social category during one episode (cf. Lewis-Williams 1982: 435). We may therefore represent the MR image-making rituals as liminoid performances in which A underwent transportation Y at the rock face but returned from it as A, ultimately unchanged (Figure 6.2).

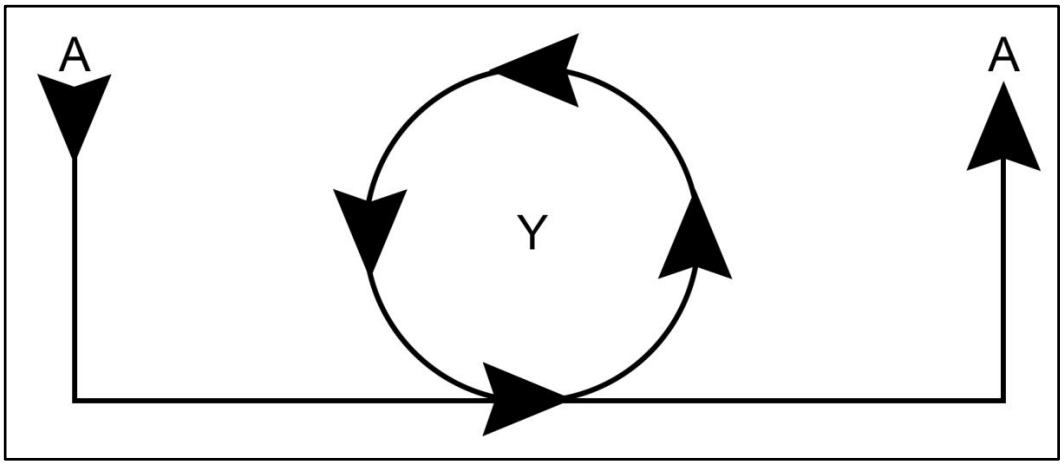


Figure 6.2. A schematised liminoid ritual in which no permanent social transformation takes place.

The four ritualised stages of the production and consumption of San painted images fit within this second kind of ritual. Each stage was ritualised and involved transformative performances (cf. Turner 1988: 15).When images were acquired during trance, the owner-of-potency could transform from human to animal *and*

back (e.g., Lee 1968: 46; Katz 1982a 100–101)[29].

In the manufacture of paint, some ochre pigments were visually as well as ritually transformed by the heat of the fire which changed, among other things, their colour (How 1962: 35, cf. Stanford 1910: 439; Dunn 1931: 188), and were mixed with potent blood or fat so that the separate ingredients become a powerful and altogether different substance (e.g., How 1962: 38; Jolly 1986: 6; Lewis-Williams 2001a: 32). In the making of images, the spiritual reality accessible to the owners-of-potency was transformed through the act of painting into the observable reality that all could see and share (cf. Lewis-Williams 2001a: 29). Finally, when used after-the-act, the images, as reservoirs of potency, allowed for the transferral of potency from the images to people who engaged with them, transforming those people from a lesser state of spiritual potency to a more increased state (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 34).

The painted rock face must be recognised as a distinct ontological entity that is, in the production and consumption of imagery, revisited, re-used, and associated with ideas of 'reservoirs of potency' and transportation. Transportation of images through the rock face in the context of performances *cannot be said to affect a change in the ontological status of those entities* that are 'fixed' to the rock face (cf. Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990: 14; Lewis-Williams 1994: 282, 2001a: 33). The images are what they depict. What changes is their place.

In this way, image-making and image-use performances were liminoid because the image-making activities of owners-of-potency involved (1) only *transformations that were not permanent*, and did not bring about any permanent changes to social categories, and (2) the *transportation* of entities through the veil between worlds. We may go a step further and suggest that at least some performances probably took place in a communal context. Recall that Mapote had painted as a boy but did not do so alone (cf. How 1962: 33). What is more, it is

[29] The communal trance dance is also a liminoid performance.

likely that, as at the communal trance dance (Chapter 3), novice image-makers apprenticed themselves to image-making owners-of-potency in order to learn the skill. As at the dance, it is likely that novices learned to make images by participation rather than from formal instructions given at a remove from the act itself. In mastering image-making, they were mastering not only the technical skills of painting, but also the esoteric spiritual skills (cf. Lewis-Williams 2001a: 33) associated with the 'ownership' and 'mastery', as well as the performance (cf. Chapter 3), of supernatural potency. Though we cannot easily, or confidently, discern images created through collective participation, there are a few select examples of painted images within the fine-line hunter-gatherer tradition which apparently lack the technical skill shown in other images from the same respective panels. This idea makes the big assumption that such images were painted during the same episodes. Following on from that speculative line of thinking, such paintings may record the learning stages of novices by apprenticeship and participation (compare, for example, the two images from site BUR1 in the Barkly East District of the Eastern Cape in Lee & Woodhouse 1970: illustration 11). Whatever the case, we can be reasonably sure that large panels of images were communally constructed, resulting from the cooperation between different image-making owners-of-potency and a number of interrelated image-making performances.

6.5: Reality, non-reality and the social construction of reality in performance

A third implication of the characterisation of San image-making as a performance is that such performances were different from Western drama and were likely to have been involved in producing and reproducing the reality of the people who performed them (Schieffelin 1985, 1996, 1998; see also Lewis-Williams 1981a: 130–131). The mastery of technical and esoteric skills by novice image-makers manifests itself in parallel with increased access to and familiarity with spiritual reality—a reality which remains largely, but not entirely, unobservable to those who do not attempt to become owners-of-potency. In the painted MR imagery, this is manifest as themes of reality and non-reality (cf. Lewis-Williams 1988, see

also Schieffelin 1998).

From a perspective of Western scholarship, particularly one influenced by science and Western philosophy, it is crucial to maintain a distinction between, on the one hand, the experience of the world as perceived by the senses and, on the other, our interpretation of that world. Such a dichotomy separates the 'real' from the 'non-real' and is beneficial in some analyses. Schieffelin's analysis of the Kaluli séance, for example, benefits from him maintaining that what he perceives as at odds with how the people that he observes explain what they do (Chapter 2). Operating from a Western scientific reality, Schieffelin sees the medium as a performer with many voices. The Kaluli, who operate within their own cultural reality, speak with the spirits when the medium's spirit leaves the room and travels to and in another realm. While it is analytically useful for Schieffelin to distance himself from Kaluli reality, he cannot understand the séance if he does not acknowledge that, for the Kaluli, the voices are spirits[30].

As we have seen, the San do not maintain a clear distinction between 'real' and 'non-real' even to the extent that one can be said to die in the context of *!aia* (Lee 1967: 31; Marshall 1969: 377–378; Katz 1982a: 87, 100). From a San perspective, there is no necessary reason to distinguish observable reality from spiritual reality and the boundaries between these are often blurred (cf. Lewis-Williams 1988, 2001a: 29). While the San image-maker would not necessarily have made a distinction, it is nevertheless useful for the analyst to maintain the distinction for two reasons:

- Reality (spiritual) is not experienced equally by all members of San society, which allows for the manipulation of privileged knowledge by certain members in a pseudo-egalitarian society.
- Descriptions of the experience of spiritual reality, such as visits to god's house or conflict with spirits-of-the-dead, are at odds with observable reality.

A final point relates to how reality is socially constructed. Western scientific

[30] The Kaluli acknowledge that a medium may deceive them by impersonating a spirit, but they nevertheless wish to talk *directly* with the spirits.

philosophy tends to hold that reality is unchanging—what changes is the best available description of reality that we have at our disposal (Barseghyan 2012: 1). This idea cannot be imposed on societies like the San that do not maintain a distinction between objective and subjective realities where everything is real and a part of reality.

In Chapter 2, we saw how highly dialogic, highly interactive performances are a locus for the social construction of reality (Schieffelin 1985). In these performances, the social interactions between the various parties involved in the performance actively co-create and build a picture of the reality of the world (cf. Schieffelin 1985). At the San trance dance, the highly communal nature of the performance allows for the social construction of reality because the healers, though they have greater access to spiritual reality, are not entirely free to control how other people, even other healers, perceive that reality. The healers who engage with the spirits-of-the-dead do so either passively or aggressively. Though these attitudes are phrased in terms of the dispensation of the spirits-of-the-dead toward the living, the relationships between the living and spirit-beings are largely collectively, not individually, maintained. *Through repeated contingent performances, the participants are able, as a social collective, to maintain or change aspects of their reality.*

Image-making performances similarly affected the social construction of reality. The rock shelters and other painted places on the MR would have allowed for 'open' performances that could have been attended by small groups of people who could then view and interact with the images *and* the image-makers. There are no secluded cavernous passageways or chambers on the MR that could hide the image-maker from view (cf. Kinahan 2017a). Access to image-making performances could, on the other hand, have been socially controlled despite the physical ease of access to the sites.

The interactions between image-makers and participants during the making of images left few material traces beyond painted residues on the rock face. However, they probably paralleled some of the interactions between performers and participants at the trance dance where there is a dialogic and dynamic

exchange between trance dancers and the participating women (Chapter 3). The act of painting is unlikely to have been, at least in most cases, performed in isolation by a lone image-maker because other forms of San expressive culture, such as narrative storytelling, singing and dancing, as well as hunting (e.g., Barnard 1992; Biesele 1993; Guenther 1999; Hewitt [1986] 2008), are principally communal activities, even if they only involve a few members of the society at a time. Rather, *image-making was performed for an 'audience'* and thus had the potential for the audience to have a similarly dialogic and dynamic influence on the direction, outcome *and the images* of image-making performances, as well as on the performativity of the image-making owner-of-potency who had to perform for and in front of his or her group. Image-making owners-of-potency made images for specific, if not invariable, purposes on behalf of a collective social group as members skilled and experienced with supernatural potency. The outcome of the performances in which images were implicated, such as their effects on the success of the tasks of owners-of-potency related to rain control, the influencing of game animals, and healing, had wider social and cosmological implications. These implications are all the more important to consider because image-makers were not always successful.

6.6: Image-makers and failure

A fourth and final implication following from the characterisation of San image-making as a performance is that image-makers can fail. If it was, indeed, the owners-of-potency who made the majority, if not all, of San images, similar 'rules' for the *accomplishment or failure* of the tasks performed by San owners-of-potency who controlled rain, influenced game and healed, would also have applied to those who made images (cf. Lewis-Williams 2001a: 32).

The placing of the image-maker at the centre of the image-making performance is based on an empirical comparison of the subject matter of the rock paintings and the content of San ethnography. Although a painted image is intimately related to the maker of the image, it is problematic to assume *a priori* that the *display of the making of the image* and *the image itself as a display* are equivalent because each

of these displays involves different kinds of interactions with any observers or participants: one is direct and immediate and the other is indirect and potentially delayed.

Images made by image-makers were, nevertheless, assessed—as well as the sheltered activities of the image-makers. If it is possible that such image-making performances could 'go wrong', how did things 'go wrong' from a San perspective? We have already seen how healers among the Ju|'hoansi assess each other and in which ways a healer can be said to have failed (Chapter 3). A greater variety of owners-of-potency is known from the 19th century |Xam narratives compiled by Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd (Hewitt [1986] 2008: appendix B). Several of those narratives record the failure of owners-of-potency to perform adequately in ritual contexts and how the person who failed was then treated.

The |Xam narrative material, published in extracts by Dorothea Bleek (Bleek 1931a, 1931b, 1932a, 1932b, 1933a, 1933b, 1935, 1936; Hollmann 2004), and freely available online (http://lloydbleekcollection.cs.uct.ac.za/), includes numerous examples of how the failure of owners-of-potency to accomplish tasks successfully were received by their community. In the context of rain-making, some owners-of-potency were lambasted by other members of their band when the thong used to capture the rain-animal broke (e.g., L.V.3: 4090–4121). Even though the user of the thong did not understand why it broke, and despite his experience, people were quick to blame his poor choice of a weak rope that was far too thin. In the context of healing, some owners-of-potency had complex relationships with 'patients' who, for example, knew the reputation of the healer not only in terms of the prestige of supernatural potency, but also in terms of the people who had died when the healer had tried, and failed, to heal them (L.V.3: 4132–4161.5, L.V.4: 4162–4199). This reputation directly affects the interactions between the healer and those who wanted healing, as well as those who decidedly did not. While the insight that image-makers can fail in their performances is a novel insight realised from the application of performance theory to the painted MR imagery, exactly what such failures would mean for the image-maker and his or her community, and whether failure can be assessed from the visual appearance

of painted images themselves, is a matter for a separate and dedicated study.

6.7: Summary

In this chapter, I have explored four implications that follow from the characterisation of image-making as a performance. These are (1) that images, if they are not akin to Western art, must have a particular ontological status, (2) that an image-making performance is likely to have been of a type that resembles performances that have been observed and documented, (3) that an image-making performance is likely to be involved in the construction of the reality of the people who perform it, and (4) that image-making performers can fail.

The characterisation of San image-making allows for several aspects of the practice of San rock art to be explored and elaborated with new and additional vocabulary. Rather than speaking in metaphorical terms of San image-making *as if* it were a performance (cf. Lewis-Williams 1994: 238), we can begin to apply the notion of performance to San image-making in productively analogical and usefully constructive ways.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7.1: Coming to terms with differences and similarities

This dissertation began with the simple observation that a suite of sites on a ridge in the Maclear District shared overall similarities but nevertheless differed in noticeable ways (Chapter 1). This feature is not unique to the suite of sites on the MR and can be found at other clusters of painted sites in southern Africa. What is unique about the MR sites is their concentration in a relatively small area along one ridge such that all of the sites have the same aspect relative to the valley below.

I investigated the observation of simultaneous similarity and difference with a simple question: what underlying mechanism, related to the making of images, could give rise to such a pattern on the MR? I began answering this question with a close study of the MR sites and the painted imagery at each site (Appendices A–D). By contextualising the painted imagery in terms of where it was painted and closely studying images one by one with the aid of digital enhancements, I put the patterns of differences and similarities in descriptive and categorical terms.

A problem, however, arose from this exercise: the etic classifications that permeated the descriptive analysis could not realistically provide insight into the variability in San rock art because the categories did not derive from a San perspective. This problem was addressed by using the documentary sources that relate to the last San inhabitants of the Maclear area and surrounds, as well as San ethnography from further afield. These sources allowed us to consider image-making as a form of San expressive culture of a piece with others, such as narrative storytelling, music and oral literature.

I then considered San expressive culture in terms of the broader field of

performance studies (Chapter 2), outlining how we might identify a performance and how theorising San performances might build on the current understanding of the practice of San rock painting—a practice for which we have no direct documentary sources. With an idea of performance in mind, I explored examples of performances, first the Kaluli séance (Chapter 2) and then the San communal healing dance (Chapter 3). The discussions of both of these examples moved us away from the Western understanding of 'performance' as akin to Aristotelian theatre and towards conceptualising performances as emergent social constructions (Schieffelin 1985: 721–722).

San expressive culture is permeated by the dual themes of tradition and idiosyncrasy. The relationship between San ethnography and San rock art was elaborated in a review of Lewis-Williams's (1994, 1995, 2001a) four stages for the ritualised production and consumption of imagery (Chapter 4). It was the backdrop against which I returned to the painted shelters and the MR images to explore both the painted interactions between the images and the rock face and the interactions implied by the painted imagery for and with other social entities.

In Chapter 5, I showed how images participated in the performances and activities of image-making owners-of-potency. Various empirically identifiable interactions between images and the rock face indicate that the rock face was a significant entity with which image-makers interacted. Images deliberately placed in depressions of the rock face show that specific kinds of interactions between image-makers and the rock face took place repeatedly. Images that disappear or emerge from cracks in the rock face, or that stand on implied surfaces, show that the rock face was more than just a surface but also a place where things *act*. At some sites, specific images were repainted, invoking direct interactions between the images and indirect interactions with the previous image-maker and performance. These and other kinds of images were not only made but also viewed and engaged with, adding another level of significance to rock art sites as places of interaction and engagement, not only for owners-of-potency, but also for other members of society.

Rather than being seen as contradictory to previous and current approaches to San

rock art, the active interaction between images and the rock face should be seen as complementary in the sense that images affected the world and participated, in tandem, with the performances of their makers. The contact made with the world of the spirits through the rock face by the owners-of-potency was *enacted* through the making of images. The images, brought forth and fixed to the rock face by the image-makers, performed specific engagements and interactions that resembled the role of the owners-of-potency as mediators between the world of the living and the world of the spirits.

Once made, however, images did not disappear. Images continued to participate in other performances. Later image-makers interacted with the pre-existing images and previous performances by superimposing, overpainting, re-painting or elaborating the images already on the rock face. Other ways in which images were used, such as being rubbed and chipped, attest to the supernatural power of the images as reservoirs of potency. Though images actively participated in interactions, the images themselves did not act or perform of their own accord because they were always enacted by the owners-of-potency or other participants.

With the specific examples of the interactions on the MR discussed, it was possible to begin to characterise MR image-making performances and to investigate the nature of such performances. In Chapter 6, the characteristics of image-making performances were outlined and some of the implications of doing so were explored. Performance theory usefully problematized some aspects of the production and consumption of imagery not previously considered in the analysis of that ritualised process.

7.2: Limitations

The greatest limitation of this dissertation has been the inability to observe San image-making performances. I have, therefore, been restricted to reconstructions that are, in all likelihood, less complex than the actual performances as they occurred in the past. A similar limitation results from the inability, due to lack of associated material finds or contexts for those finds, to include other forms of material culture that might add nuance to the reconstructions of, in Hollmann's

(2017:76) words, "people's past performances." A further limitation, which is quickly disappearing (e.g., Bonneau, Pearce *et al*. 2017), is the lack of direct dates for specific images on the MR. I have therefore been limited to discussions of temporal relationships in general terms.

7.3: Insights from performance theory and future directions

I have used performance theory in an attempt to investigate differences and similarities on the MR from a San perspective by using themes that accord with San expressive culture, rather than themes that derive from foreign, Western and etic points of view. The application of performance theory has led to the identification of a mechanism (performance) with loci (interactions) at which variability or stability can be introduced or maintained in the act of image-making within the broader context of San rock art practice. This is because, as we noted in Chapter 2, *performances will necessarily change to some degree with the passage of time* (Schieffelin 1998: 199, citing Bourdieu 1977: 83). As image-making performances change, so too will the imagery, but it is a characteristic of San expressive culture to navigate such changes from a socially contextualised individual position (cf. Guenther 1999: 135). In any case, it seems clear that in the context of San image-making performances, trends in the imagery on the MR emerged from the deliberate ways that the imagery was made and related to features of the rock face as well as other images: "[t]he 'distance' between new painted images and older ones was crucial in establishing the social position of the makers. *Similarities said one thing, differences another*" (Lewis-Williams 2001a: 34, emphasis added).

Most importantly, performance theory has shown that we must come to understand the MR as a microcosm of San image-making. Similarities between sites are altogether more important not because of shared chronologies or styles, but because of the interactions in which those images participate. The understanding of complex panels and the relationships between sites—current questions in San rock art research—will benefit from considering different images not as the mere products of separate events, *but as the products of cumulative,*

subsequent and different performances.

Performance theory has shown that we should see images as active participants in the performances of image-makers, but that image-makers may not, in every case, be stand-alone performers. Limited, as we are, to the reconstruction of performances, each site and each panel of images—indeed, possibly even individual images—must be carefully considered in turn, without misguided wholesale explanations that all the painted images necessarily result from equivalent, knowable and transferrable performances or activities. To this end, we can begin to build on the foundations of the meaning-centred approach to San rock art by thoroughly investigating how social significances were articulated in image-making-performances at multiple sites and in multiple ways.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SITE DESCRIPTIONS

Site descriptions are presented here in numerical order.

MEL1

MEL1 is a long, low rock shelter. The lower parts are rubbed by livestock in places and the surface is weathered. As with all the shelters, the grass just below the drip line is high in winter (July), and in some places the ground surface drops away to the valley less than 2 m from the shelter wall. It is unlikely, despite the many paintings in this shelter, that people lived here: there is no shelter from the wind and little cover over-head, and, where there is some cover overhead, the ground is wet or damp.

The most remarkable feature of this site is that much of the rock surface comprises depressions in which paintings have been placed and framed. Noteworthy examples include two groups of painted human figures that are seated with one figure either pointing at another's stomach or at the ground. Further paintings include a rhebok painted in a circular depression (Figure 5.3A) and two groups of human figures with equipment in deep depressions (see Figure 5.3B for one example). There are many paintings at this site and the full length of the shelter is painted. An unfortunate consequence of the uneven, 'depressed' rock surface is that it is extremely difficult to photograph the rock paintings.

Also noteworthy is a place where water trickles down adjacent to the main painted area. Here it is damp with moss and algae, and there was a frog resident when I visited in June 2016. Bats also roost in this cave-like area. Stone artefacts are clearly visible on the floor, having been washed clean of sediment by the moving water. It is not clear whether they have been washed down from above or whether they are *in situ*. It is, however, apparent that the water trickle and the dampness of the floor, even in winter, would now prevent a person from sheltering here. It seems likely that the same would hold for the past.

MEL2

MEL2 is remarkable in that it is not a rock shelter. The paintings have been made in two places in the rock face where blocks have fallen away and created two small recesses. The paintings are generally protected from the elements. The site could not have been used as a living space by people: there is no shelter or overhang overhead and no floor protected by an overhang. While the painted surfaces are recessed, flat and vertical, they are bounded above by naturally weathered rock that contains circular hollows that recede deep into the rock surface, and below by irregular depressions and undulations similar to the rock surface at MEL1.

MEL2 has two panels. The smaller panel consists of one faded shaded polychrome eland. The larger panel contains human figures and eland (Figure 5.9). Orange bodies of eland have preserved but are now faded. Some dark red eland bodies are also visible. The human figures are not all depicted in the same manner but are all painted predominantly in a medium to dark red.

MEL3

MEL3 is a densely painted site with some flaking across most of the painted surfaces. Most of the visible paintings are covered with a fine layer of dust that dulls the brilliance of the colours.

The site offers some cover overhead. There is some distance between the rear wall and the drip line. The painted surfaces are vertical and generally flat. In some places, it is clear that large blocks of rock fell away before the paintings were made and resulted in surfaces perpendicular to the length of the back wall of the shelter which has most of the paintings on it. The back wall of the shelter is undercut at the base (i.e. there is a small gap underneath the painted wall where less resistant shale has weathered away). This gap does not recede far back and is perhaps just high enough and wide enough for a person to lie supine uncomfortably underneath the painted rock surface.

Here follows a description of the paintings at MEL3 as one moves from left to right if facing the shelter.

Panel 1

The first panel is flaked and dusty. It contains some antelope painted low enough on the rock face that they have been rubbed by passing animals and livestock. A shaded polychrome eland with an extra curved line above the shoulder hump is clearly visible. Above the shaded polychrome eland are two human figures in dark red. The one on the left is seated. The one on the right has a long neck and a white head and stands with its forearms in front of the body. It has four fingers on one hand. The figure wears a cape and seems to be partially superimposed by the eland. The upper body of another human figure, painted in white and light brown, is also visible. This figure holds two arrows in one hand, the arrows forming an 'X' where they meet in the palm. Other paintings, possibly of rhebok and eland, are present but are flaked or unclear.

Panel 2

Around the corner to the right of the first panel, the rock surface makes a 90° turn toward the back wall. The paintings here are faded and flaked. Human and antelope figures are painted in red, some are polychrome. The only distinguishable features belong to a human figure. The figure is well preserved but covered in dust and is difficult to see. The figure walks forward with the torso bent slightly over at the waist; the head is slightly back, and the arms extended just in front of the waist at a small angle to the body. This 'walking zombie' posture is also present at MEL7. The figure also has a bow (slightly curved red line), and light red to orange lines running from the left shoulder to underneath the right arm are visible (these have been referred to as 'bandoliers'). The neck is clearly visible with white dots and red flecks along the back of the hook-head. The face, present, is not visible under the layer of dust deposited.

Panel 3

This panel, extending right from Panel 2, is densely painted with many layers of images and instances of superpositioning. The top third of the panel is heavily flaked and weathered and very little survives that is visible to the naked eye. The images in the bottom third appear to have been rubbed by livestock. The lower third of the panel slopes outwards from top to bottom resulting in dust adhering to it.

Paintings here appear to overlie an amorphous red background. Many of the clearer paintings are of antelope: shaded polychrome rhebok and eland in whites, reds, and yellows. Part of a thin red line, bounded by two solid white lines, occurs in the lower left of the panel (Figure 5.13). One antelope (rhebok?) appears to stand on this line. It is possible that the line disappears into a crack to the left, but this is uncertain.

Several human figures are distinct: some are white and some are red. A group of three white figures may be considered together (Figure 5.27). The largest figure stands in a bending forward posture as if dancing. He wears a red hat and bleeds from the nose. The nose, lips and chin are shown—the chin well behind the lips. One arm is behind his back and the other holds arrows in front of the body. A red band is around his waist with two red lines trailing off above the buttocks. His legs are long and taper from the buttocks to the knees, and from the knee to the ankle. His feet are long. One foot has three red toes, each with a white claw or nail. The other foot has four red toes, each with a white claw or nail. Another white figure, seated, points an arm at the thigh of the dancing figure. The nose, lips and chin of this figure are shown, the chin well behind the lips. This seated figure has its legs outstretched in front of it and the pointing arm clearly has a pointing finger at the end of an enlarged forearm. The other arm is behind the seated figure's back, and the fingers (5?) are shown. Diagonal lines protrude down the side of the back, like spines or feathers. A third white figure, below the shins of the dancing figure, appears to be seated or kneeling in a typical arms-back posture. The nose, lips and chin are shown, the chin well behind the lips. A fourth figure has been scratched in later, above and left of the group, mimicking the

dancer.

The larger red figure right of the group of white figures has white decorations around the waist and holds a bow and 3(?) arrows in one hand, with the other hand bent up towards the face below the chin (no nasal blood). An orange band runs from the right shoulder to under the left arm (bandolier). The face is painted in white with the nose, lips and chin visible. Some hair is depicted in dashes of red. The legs are long and have white dots on the calves, possibly indicative of dance rattles. How the legs end is unclear. One foot appears to end in two 'toes' which may indicate a cloven hoof. A 'hoofed human' (therianthrope) with hoofed legs and human torso occurs in Panel 1 at MEL7 (this image is categorised as a human by George 2013: fig. 2).

Panel 4

Panel 4 is a continuation of the previous surface and is parallel to the plane of Panel 3. This area of the site is badly flaked and only some amorphous, densely layered red pigment survives in some areas. No individual paintings were distinguished at the site or from the photographs.

Panel 5

Panel 5 is on a surface perpendicular to Panels 3 and 4. This panel is covered in dust and paintings of humans and antelope are difficult to make out. Smudged and amorphous pigment occurs at the bottom of the panel. I elaborate on four distinguishable human figures. The upper part of one figure on the middle left is detailed, preserving lines on the neck and back (perhaps a bag or quiver) and shows a long arm outstretched with a pointing finger clearly shown. The lower part of another figure is visible, showing a red leg and white kaross with the buttocks of the figure in a small depression in the rock surface similar to paintings at MEL1. The rest of the figure survives but is covered in dust. A third red figure is seated with its arms back. A fourth figure is standing front-on with something indistinct crossing one of the legs. The brushstrokes in the paint are still visible on most of the figures.

Panel 6

The panel is densely painted with many layers of painting and many images. It is, perhaps, the best-preserved section of this site. While dusty in parts, most of the images are still decipherable.

One of the most notable paintings is a snake which is painted in shaded polychrome but is predominantly red on the upper surface and off-white below. Its colours are very similar to those of the eland above it, and are reminiscent of the rain-animal (and the eland surrounding it) at MEL5. The snake runs across the full length of the panel just above the midline and divides the panel into upper and lower sections. One end of the snake goes into a crack at a junction with Panel 5. Most interestingly, the snake seems to emerge on Panel 5 and, while the colours are the same, is not easily visible or distinct in shape. It is thus difficult to decipher which end is which, and whether it is the head or tail that goes into and comes out of the rock. When at the rock face, it seemed to me that the tail end might be present on the right-hand side of Panel 6, resembling the tail discussed by Mallen (2005) for the snake at the nearby site of LABX.

The full length of this snake is covered in what have been argued to be termites (Green *et al.* 2007), giving the appearance of a dotted snake. The termites and the snake interact with a therianthropic figure whose upper body is not clearly visible because of the dust and some flaking. The partially termite-covered figure seems to walk along the snake and has termites between his legs and around his groin area. The figure seems to hold an arrow or stick in one of his hands. Next to one of his feet is a man painted in red, bent at the waist as if dancing, with his elbows up and white lines around his waist. Behind him, and with one front leg clearly on the back of the snake, is a shaded polychrome eland. No termites overlie the eland. Above its head is a thin white human figure. Above the shoulder hump of the eland, there are more termites which coincide with the extended stick in the arm of the termite-covered man and the groin area of a second therianthropic figure seated on its haunches and viewed front-on. The seated therianthrope has a hartebeest head and has hooves instead of hands. One arm crosses the body and the other reaches out left to a faint thin line or stick. The hoof-hand does not touch

the stick. The therianthropes buttocks are shown and its legs are in an ‘M’-position as if squatting or sitting. Termites extend from the other figure to in front of the legs and groin of the seated hartebeest therianthrope.

In the lower section of the panel, below the snake, many more antelope are visible and the theme of interaction between the paintings and the rock is continued. Underneath the position of the termite-covered man is a faintly visible eland painted over the snake which is looking into the rock; we thus see only the back of its head. Another antelope also looking into the rock is painted in the lower right of the panel. On the lower left of the panel are two human figures with bows. The larger appears also to be associated with a long curved red line (stick or bow?) but this is unclear. Next to them are shaded polychrome antelope, both eland and rhebok. These are in a variety of postures from running, standing, jumping and sitting down. Some have all the legs stretched out forwards and backwards. To the right of centre, there are several figures in white (Figure 5.28). One is pinkish white and bent at the middle (as if dancing) with elbows raised and forearms forward. His knees are bent. The nose and lips (and red tongue?) are shown with apparent realism and it has red in the nose area that may represent nasal bleeding. It does not stream backwards across the face. The man’s two arms end in hands that coincide with red lines perpendicular to his body. They resemble sticks held parallel to the floor but it is not clear where they terminate. The legs of a thin, red figure with a penis in front of the pinkish figure may intersect with the red lines. The pink figure may also have a skin bag, cloak or another accoutrement on his upper back. Above him is a thinner white human figure with an axe-shaped head shown in profile. The head has red marks where the lips, nostril and eye should be. The figure clearly has a circular red ring that may depict an earring. The oddly shaped head has a long, thin neck. The torso tapers from the shoulders to the waist and the front of the body is covered by an animal skin which hangs forward. Some of the skin appears to cover the back of the shoulders. Two arms are shown. One, possibly the left, extends straight in front of the body to just above shoulder height and ends in a 4-finger point, or it may be reaching out. The other arm extends behind the body. The figure has a penis and his body is slightly bent at the waist as if dancing. The knees, too, are slightly bent and the feet are large.

To the right of these figures are more antelope, densely painted, as well as some poorly preserved human figures. One appears to be seated or running with both arms outstretched. Another seems to be crouched and kneeling with an arm extended in front. Also notable is a polychrome shape (a rare depiction of a plant?) that resembles a palm tree as if viewed from above.

The top and lower right parts of this panel are poorly preserved, owing to dust and/or flaking.

Panel 7

The painted surface continues to the right of Panel 6 but undulates and recedes backwards to Panel 7. Panel 7 is densely painted with many layers of superpositioning. Most of the surface is flaked, but three large, beautifully painted shaded polychrome eland are distinct and in relations of superpositioning. At least one has an extra line above the shoulder hump. The lowermost parts of the panel also feature polychrome paintings and have not preserved well; one image may, because of the tail, depict a feline. At least one other kind of antelope is present in the upper right corner (rhebok?). A few red human figures with bows are discernible but these are not very clear or complete. One seated human figure to the left is painted in a thick, opaque white paint with the realistic painted face and hair shown in profile. An eye is shown in black. The knees of the figure are close to the body and are shown just below shoulder height. The toes on the feet are shown. Another figure, on the right, is painted in red and white. He carries a bow and hunting bag and has decoration on his ankles and knees. The head and face are painted in white and the hair is represented by dashes of red. Other details are not clearly visible.

Panel 8

Adjacent to Panel 7 is a piece of rock that is isolated by cracks most of the way around it (Figure 5.8). It also features several natural holes. On it is painted a figure in white that has one arm bent up to the front of the face which is realistically aligned. Five fingers are shown. The other arm lies beside the body

which ends at a step in the rock at the waist of the figure. The hand of this figure 'points' or 'reaches out' to a hole in the rock and may be interacting with it. Directly below is a red zigzag painting that may be a snake. To the right of the isolated white figure are poorly preserved human figures in karosses. Further interactions on this panel are visible in a depression of the rock face: just below centre, a human figure and a hartebeest interact (a third human figure is found on top of the hartebeest's legs) (Figure 5.5). To the right of that, another antelope with short horns (hartebeest?) is painted lying down. Pigment below these two interactions is amorphous and dusty. To the right of the resting hartebeest, a wash has obfuscated any paintings. To the upper right of that, the torso of a pinkish-white figure is visible. It has a face that slopes slightly forward, a long thin neck, broad shoulders, a tapering body and very thin arms. The left side of the torso is red. To the right of this figure, the panel is flaked and, where not flaked, the pigment is homogenous and blurred. Two human figures are distinct. One is a tall bowman with a prognathic white face, long thin neck, and red dots (not dashes) along the back of the head. Its stance is as if it had just released an arrow from the bow it holds in the front of its body. The bow-string is shown. It has bi-chrome arrows, either in hand or in a quiver. The other figure is seated in the 'M'-position. The seated figure holds a bow in one hand and two arrows in the other. The buttocks are shown as with the hartebeest therianthrope in Panel 6. The pigment is white-turning-black and is not very clear. The sheltered part of MEL3 ends just to the right of these figures.

MEL4

MEL4 is a rock overhang. The drip line is located high above the painted surface which curves upwards and outwards; the curve is gradual like a wave. As a consequence, many mineral-runs cover the rock surface and have affected the preservation of the paintings.

The paintings here occur along the bottom of the overhang near the floor. Although they actually occur along one continuous surface, a tall vertical crack in the rock face surround by a whitish deposit divides the two areas and I therefore

refer to the two painted areas as different panels.

Panel 1

The panel to the left of the central crack is badly flaked and most of the images are faded. The lowest parts of the rock surface are very weathered and recede away from the rock face, undercut by weathering agents. The painted red bodies of a few eland images are visible, and orange pigments seem to represent the lowermost layer. A hartebeest (?) in darker red is also present. The other images on this panel are human figures and associated paraphernalia like bags and quivers. Four erect men are distinct; the far left one has a bow and arrows and the next has only arrows. The two on the right carry nothing. It seems highly possible that there were more figures to the left of this sequence that have not survived. The four discernible erect men have all had the penis scratched off in a direction somewhat parallel to the erection. To the lower left of these figures are faint human figures. One is an erect man with a curved bow and arrows in hand with more arrows on his back. To his left is a seated figure that leans back on one arm and points up with the other. Between these two figures and below them are red shapes that are difficult to decipher. Some resemble human legs and feet starting from below the knee, together with hunting bags and quivers. No white has persevered on this panel. A number of the human figures clearly had white on the ankles and wrists. It has now weathered away and has left gaps.

Panel 2

To the right of the vertical crack that divides the two panels is faded pigment and most of the surface is flaked. Many washes cover the rock surface. Four groups of images can be distinguished.

The first consists of several large red masculine figures painted in a dark red. These figures have inverted triangular heads with bulky bodies (resembling the human bodies at MEL8) and are larger than on Panel 1. Some of the figures carry bags and other equipment and have a band around the waist. One is particularly detailed with two tasselled ‘bandoliers’ across the chest and what looks like a

spear carried on the back. The uppermost figure of this group is in a ‘run-run’ position. Below him, one figure bends over slightly and has two red lines that go across the body and then down. It does not hold these ‘strings’ which may stem from the figure adjacent to the upper left. To the right is the red body of an eland, now a faded and amorphous block. On the right side of the block is an upright walking figure outlined in red (Figure 5.17). This figure has a head and carries a bow, presumably with arrows too. It wears a kaross that hangs down to the top of the thighs. It is visible only in outline and ends indistinctly, not suggesting an animal skin form. The legs are interesting in that they are decorated with wavy lines on the thighs and have a band on the knee.

Next to the first group is a small area of unpainted rock to the right of which are some human figures in red that are depicted in a very similar way to the first, being bulky, large and having inverted triangular heads. One has the outlines of an antelope eared cap which looks like a three-eared crown. To the right and below these figures is a red eland body, the other parts having washed away. Above it is an indistinguishable painting, and to the right of that are a number of vertical superficial scratches. These start from the backline of an upside down eland above. The animal is clearly upside-down and some of the white of the neckline is still visible. This is not the only upside-down antelope on this panel. Another is painted vertically beneath groups one and two. Nearby is a painting of an indistinct human figure and a very faded human in an arms-back posture.

Like the first, the second faded eland also has a long upright outline of a human figure on its right side (cf. Figure 5.17). While the location of the head is clear, it is uncertain whether the head is human or antelope. The figure carries a quiver of arrows and wears a kaross outlined in red, which ends at the top of the thighs. No decoration is visible on the legs. The outlined figure overlies a faded image of one of the dark red human figures with an inverted triangular head. To its right are at least two figures that wear dark purple antelope eared caps, have white bodies that are highly decorated in dashed lines and zigzag red lines. One may have wings, and they may thus be related to a group of figures above a step in the rock face. Below these and to the right are indistinct human figures painted in red. Near the

bottom, painted in a large hollow in the rock, are some paintings in a dark purple-red pigment that look ‘cruder’ and ‘simpler’ than the others (Figure 5.6). A particularly curious painting shows an upside-down man who seems to be spread-eagled with long hair hanging off his head. Another appears to be a cow or quadruped with a hollow body and two breasts shown from the side. Other figures resemble humans, or possibly baboons, sitting with bows. They are not very clear but could perhaps be deciphered with tracing.

The final group is painted higher up than all the other images and is partly flaked. The whites while not fresh are still visible and their outline and extent can be made out. Four figures are distinct with further painting visible to the right where a complex figure with wings has flaked badly. On the left, two polychrome figures stand while two are seated and clap. The two standing figures have lines around the nose which may indicate nasal bleeding. One standing figure has a very detailed head with a white conical hat. Lines stream from under his arms. The right arm (which possibly ends in a hoof) holds a bow and two lines which continue to the winged figure on the right. The two lines have further lines that hang down from them.

MEL5

MEL5 has two painted areas. The first (MEL5 north) is one densely painted panel and the other (MEL5 south) is a painted area off to the left of the main panel. Both areas are sheltered but have little floor space despite an overhang over both areas.

The main panel has survived thanks to the other part of the shelter being more sheltered and so more favoured by livestock. The unfortunate result is that the paintings on the sloping wall of MEL5 south are covered in a thick greasy dust. Some vivid paintings survive on the roof above the sloping wall at MEL5 south (Figure 4.1).

<u>MEL5 north</u>

The lower part of this panel is very dusty and not as clear as the upper part.

Paintings of shaded polychrome eland overwhelmingly dominate the main panel. They face multiple directions. One is vertical (with scratches in the rock between the head and neck) and another is upside-down with its feet meeting the junction between the wall and overhang of the shelter. The eland images are also in a variety of postures. At least one is shown with the head looking at the viewer while another is viewed rear-end on. The upside-down eland has one leg bent. Many of the polychrome shaded paintings of antelope are in relationships of superpositioning with other images or other images of antelope.

There are a number of groups of human figures here too. A few groups walking with sticks or bows are visible in the dusty lower half. Some figures are painted in red, others in black. It is not clear what sorts of activities they are engaged in because it is difficult to see all the images. Most are associated with equipment such as bows and karosses. Some may be dancing. One figure is seated with a hand to the front part of its head or face (no blood is visible). Another appears to stand and clap. One lone figure in white appears to dance with an arm back and one forward. He may be pointing. He wears an antelope-eared cap and has a face with exaggerated features. Near the upside-down eland in the top right are some human figures in a brownish red. One is upside down and other is painted as if falling from the sky. His feet over-lie a painting of a strange beast with claws and a feline tail that may be a rain-animal. Over the rain-animal are the faded remnants of kaross clad figures with bodies that now resemble kidney beans. Below the rain-animal is a depiction of a mongoose-like animal painted in white and a white rhebok that appears to be smelling something because its head is raised up (Figure 5.15). These two images are painted on a step in the rock, the outline of which resembles a small hill. There are additional rhebok on this panel but are fewer in number than the eland. One red human figure points upwards with one arm, recalling the pointing theme along the ridge (cf. George 2013: table 1), and another may be a solitary dancer because it is bent at the middle with what may be a very long penis (cf. MEL8, George 2011).

An important consideration for the rain theme at this side is a rhebok that appears to have red lightning coming out of its head. Two nearby eland have vertical red

lines along the neck that likely show skin folds.

On the right-hand side of the panel, between two obvious mineral runs, is a very clear dance scene indicated by the presence of a number of clapping figures and one figure which lies supine. To the right of these is a red ‘run-run’ figure. Below, there is what appears to be the head of a serpent. The body is not visible.

MEL5 south

The side area is not densely painted and has at least three areas with paintings.

On the underside of the overhang are a number of vivid images. One is of a man with a white conical hat (cf. MEL4) and a stick across his back. Nearby is a human figure in orange and brown with lines on the legs (Figure 4.1). Painted over it and around it are rhebok painted in shades of red. One is interesting because the legs are above the body with the neck and head below, as if the buck was using its legs as wings (Figure 4.1). To the right, an orange image that looks like a tortoise (Figure 4.3). The orange image has one hand and one foot each with five digits and one foot and hand each with four digits. A small triangular tail is shown.

Towards the outside lip of the overhand of the shelter are more paintings. These are eland and human figures only. The eland are red and white, with possible black on the hooves, but they are not shaded. In places, mineral washes have passed over the paintings. The human figures are in a dark red and are very difficult to make out. A lone white figure is painted in a mineral wash. It is not yet clear whether the wash is above or below the image.

On the back wall of the shelter, at the junction with the ceiling in this part of the shelter, are a number of human figures painted in a dark red. Some are seated and others stand or walk. It is not clear that this group of figures is dancing. Nearby, and painted in a very similar colour and shade of red, is an eland that is upside-down with one front leg bent. Further along, but on the roof rather than the wall, is a rear end of an eland or bovid painted in white. This image was noticed only from the photographs and was not seen when at the site.

On the wall of the shelter are a number of barely visible paintings in red and white. Of particular interest is a thin red line that weaves in an out of the rock (Figure 5.12). The line with dots on either side is distinct in several places and where difficult to see shows up in the photograph. The line meets the feet of an eland that is covered in much dust. On this band of rock are antelope and human figures that are difficult to make out. One is clearly in a trance-buck posture and may be related to the thin red line. Another figure has long white arms (wings?) that seem to trail behind it. The image is far from clear.

Lower down, and protected from settling dust, are some beautifully preserved paintings of rhebok. Two are in the act of climbing over rocks. One is painted in a stepped area of the rock and looks the viewer head-on (Figure 5.7). Another looks over its own back. Some of these have horns and the species may therefore be determined.

Finally, to the right of the shelter wall, toward the main panel of MEL5, are some thin and emaciated figures in white (spirits-of-the-dead?). Both appear to be running and one carries a thin stick with thin diagonal lines painted on it in red. This image overlies an indistinct painting underneath.

MEL6

MEL6 has two painted areas. The northern area is sheltered and the southern area is exposed to the elements. The southern area is separate from the northern area which features more detailed and colourful paintings.

Neither of the two painted areas could feasibly have been living spaces. MEL6 south is painted on a surface created when a large block of rock fell away from the main rock face. Although there is an overhang, the remaining wall is undercut below the painted surface and is not protected from the wind. The floor area does not extend more than 3 m away from the painted surface.

The panels at MEL6 north occur on a narrow (<1 m) band of vertical rock face just below the shelter ceiling. The area is more sheltered from wind and rain and it has an uneven floor comprising many fallen slabs of rock. Currently, it is covered

in hyrax droppings and no artefacts are visible on the floor. To the right of MEL6 north one is able to climb over precariously balanced rocks to the southern end of MEL5.

MEL6 south

Oxalates cover the entire surface of this panel. Two layers of paintings are apparent. They are distinguished by their colour, size and the manner of depicting human figures. If we consider these two groups as distinct units, one overlies the other. I begin with the upper, more recent layer that overlies the layer below.

The upper group is painted in 'blood' red. More fugitive pigments have not preserved. The first group is made up of 11 human figures, two 'trance-buck' and one quadrupedal image (Figure 5.24) that is reminiscent of the left-hand group on a panel at MEL6 north. Other indistinct, un-deciphered, dusty or faded bits of paint are not discussed here but could be deciphered with further digital enhancements, tracing or cleaning of the surface. Several of the human figures are erect, and this may correspond with pointing postures. Four human figures are pointing: one is seated with its legs extended in front of it and it points directly at the stomach of another seated figure. One points upward and away with two arrows in its pointing hand. A third is painted as if coming out of a step in the rock face; its feet are not shown but the legs begin from a step in the rock. The fourth is faded and is below the large trance-buck figure at the top right. Four figures seem to be dancing as they are slightly bent at the waist and lead over. Three have their arms raised up as if in ecstasy, and the feet of two of the figures appear to be hooves. One figure has its painted hair preserved and thus shows the size, shape and colour of the head type for these figures. Some of the figures appear to hold things, possibly arrows, but they are not clear. One figure dances in a typical arms-back posture. Two other figures are interesting because their postures recall other paintings along the ridge. The first, a standing person wearing a cloak, has one hand under the bottom of its now faded face with the other arm coming across the body and the forearm ending at shoulder-height. This gives the impression at first of a triangular breast and resembles some figures at

MEL7. The other figure sits on its haunches and is viewed front-on with is bent legs in the 'M'-position. The fingers, four on each hand, are shown and painted as if the wrist of each arm were resting on the knee of each leg. The buttocks are exaggerated and distinct like the hartebeest therianthrope at MEL3 and one of the figures painted in white at MEL3.

To the right of the human figures is a human figure in a trance-buck position, on its knees with its arms back and with a red line emanating from the head (Figure 5.24). Next to it is a quadrupedal animal (or human-animal conflation) that resembles figures on a panel at MEL6 north. Its neck is clearly down but the position and shape of the head is difficult to see. To the right of these two paintings are the remains of another, larger trancing human figure with its arms spread-out as if flying.

The second group of figures clearly underlies the first in the centre of the panel. This is interesting because the second group appears to be 'cruder' but cannot be later. These paintings are in a dark purple pigment. Generally, they are smaller than any of the images in the other group. Much of the imagery is not easily recognizable and requires decipherment by tracing or digital enhancements. While it is difficult to 'see' what is painted, it is nevertheless obvious that the art is part of the traditional San corpus. Several images are of therianthropes that have antelope heads with horns and large phalluses (cf. MEL8). One figure is more 'human', thicker in the body and looks like it wears a beehive-shaped hat. One of the larger red figures appears to point at the stomach of a smaller purple therianthrope; this may be intentional superpositioning. As at MEL7, hartebeest are painted on this panel. Among a confusing mix of images, one hartebeest, possibly a therianthrope, extends a forelimb to hold onto one of two hunting bags. Other antelope, and other kinds of images, are present on this panel but remain un-deciphered.

MEL6 north

This panel has been damaged by graffiti since it was traced and redrawn by Thomas Dowson in 1988. It features two areas of paintings that may realistically

be called panels in terms of Lewis-Williams's (1992) terminology.

The group on the left contains unusual human-animal conflations. The figures are all in kneeling or hunched-over postures. Four of the images are quadrupedal and three of them seem to wear a skin or cloak that may, at the same time, be part the creature itself. All the cloaks have stripes. Parts of the body are clearly covered in skin while in other parts it seems as if the skin is the creature's body. One of the quadrupeds has its head down, and the body, head, and neck shape recall a similar painting at MEL6 south. Another figure clearly has a bovine head with horns indicative of cattle and is seated as if it was a cow lying down. Three of the quadrupeds wear hats or have therianthropic heads. One has a face that is prognathic and has teeth. Beneath it is a human figure in brown that runs with its feet along a crack in the rock and carries what may be a tied up flywhisk. The front legs of the therianthrope above the human are not tucked under the body but seem to be long antelope legs connected to the skin of the cloak it wears. There are two snake images, one with tusks. One becomes or comes out of the body of a creature or person that then pulls another person (?) through a crack in the rock face. The validity of the relations between these figures is difficult to decipher. To the left, and going across the crack, is a bell-shape in brown with a hoof on either side. Further left, and below the crack, is an image that Dowson noted but did not trace (Figure 5.18).

The panel to the right shows a trance dance (Figure 1.1). This panel has been discussed by Blundell (2004) and is implicated in his social arguments and in Dowson's (1994). The panel shows a tall central dancer who carries a bag on his back with a stick and arrows/tied up flywhisks. He bleeds from the nose and is erect. Around him are seated clapping figures which, in turn, are surrounded by hunting bags and arrows, as well as other equipment that is not readily decipherable. Nine figures are seated to the dancer's right and 11 to his left. These two groups are distinguishable first by colour as the group to the left is maroon and darker and the right-hand group is orange and lighter. The dancer himself seems a mix of both colours and it is curious that these colours divide (or mix) in the middle. More figures on the right clap than on the left, but there are more

figures with teeth and grotesque claws on the right. One of these has its arms and hands in the correct positions for it to be clapping (Figure 5.29A). One figure on the right also has teeth and claws. Different identities may be implied for the two coloured groups, or they may be implied for the clawed figures; both situations have a bearing on interpretation. Most immediately, the panel has been defaced and it seems that the clawed figures on both sides of the dance scene have received the brunt of the damage (Figure 5.29). Whether this was deliberate defacing or use-after-the-act by a later group is an important consideration.

MEL7

MEL7 has the largest painted surface along the ridge. It is also probably the largest shelter with the greatest floor area and the largest overhang. As at several other shelters along the ridge, the painted surface does not meet the floor but is undercut. Stone artefacts are present on the floor, but the site is frequented by cows that have disturbed the surface. They have not rubbed against the paintings.

There are several panels at MEL7. I have divided the painted surface into panels based on where the images are found. Most of the surface is painted right across the shelter and cannot strictly be broken into panels. Where paintings are not visible, it is likely that they have been washed away or are covered in dust or minerals.

Panel 1

The first panel is found at the extreme left end of the shelter and was traced by David Pearce and Leanne George. The paintings on this panel are well preserved and show a number of human and antelope figures. Noteworthy are those that are interacting, that is, human figures that are pointing or reaching out to shaded polychrome shaded eland (Figures 5.25, 5.26). Several of these figures carry sticks, and it is possible that at least some of them have hooves; the feet are unrealistic. Two rhebok have been superimposed by hartebeest (Pearce & George 2011, see Figure 5.21). Hartebeest are perhaps present in the greatest numbers at this site (Appendix D). Also on this panel is a thin red line (Figure 5.11). It comes

out from a junction between two rock surfaces and ends at the feet of a quadrupedal animal that is painted in the same manner as the superimposed hartebeest (Figure 5.22). The hind hoof of an eland also touches the line, as well as the head of a human figure below the line (Figure 5.11). Several of the rhebok on this panel are vertical or are upside-down. One of the human figures is very detailed with minute dots preserved on the face and arrows. Two human-like figures are in a monochrome orange pigment. One is clearly therianthropic and points with a large arrow or a spear (cf. George 2013: fig. 2). Both have large heads or wear headdresses. A seated white figure is next to a second white figure which appears to point and overlies a bi-chrome figure with a bow.

There is an outline of a hartebeest (?). Three figures have 'hocks' or hooves for feet. Several of the antelope bleed from the nose. There is a hollow bodied man at the bottom left of the panel. Several of the human figures are tall and painted in a dark purple under everything else. One is in the posture of the baboon therianthrope at MEL8. There are a number of seemingly random blotches of colour. There is a cluster of what appear to be hoof-prints. A few eland also have an extra line above the hump. At least two have extra legs. There is a starburst shape on the rear on a rear-facing eland.

Panel 2

As one rounds the corner to the left of the first panel, one sees more paintings of rhebok in various postures (see Figure 5.4A). These paintings are not particularly well preserved or clear. Low down on this section of the rock face is a monochrome human figure with hooves.

Panel 3

Further to the right the rock surface is badly flaked. Many layers of paint are, however, still visible. The paintings are overwhelmingly of human figures and antelope, principally eland, hartebeest and rhebok. A very large eland is blackened in parts. To the left, some tall human figures underlie more human figures. Below them and left is a human figure with breasts and a thin therianthropic figure with a

kaross. Above them, a human figure with a headdress and decorations on the shoulders, wrists and elbows. It holds something in its hand. Superimposed on the bodies of many indistinct polychrome eland are two curved red lines, the inner thinner than the outer. To the right and centre of the panel is the torso of a hartebeest therianthrope. Some way above it, there is a running human figure with a bow and a 'Chamisso headdress'—a type of clothing known from the nearby site of CHA1 (see Figure 1.2B) which Lee & Woodhouse (1970: 80 and figure D24) suggest is "[a] cap probably made of the skin of a small animal such as a hare or a jackal with the tail removed." Further to the right is a group of human figures with postures that suggest they are related to where water has washed the rock surface white. To the right of them are more antelope and human figures. One human figure interacts with a hartebeest. Over the hartebeest is superimposed a human figure holding two arrows. It is a faded white colour and wears an orange hat.

There are many, many images on this surface and there are clearly many layers of paintings. In the middle of the panel, modern visitors to the site have scratched in their names and scratched over the rock paintings. In other places, the pigment has been rubbed smooth.

Panel 4

This area has a scattering of visible images. They may well overlie other now faded images. Most are in white. One is a dancing, clapping human figure with fingers shown. The head and neck of two antelope without horns (hartebeest?) are visible as well as another antelope, possibly an eland. To the left, a human figure with an outstretched arm and fingers is visible. There is also a line that is thin and red. What it is and what it is associated with is not clear.

Panel 5

On this part of the rock surface is another line that is red and thin. No white dots fringe the line and it is difficult to see where the line goes and with what it is associated. Pieces of other lines are present elsewhere; their nature is also not

easily decipherable because of dust that sits on top of the paintings. Three trance-buck figures are present on this panel. The human and antelope theme is continued here. Only noteworthy images are described in detail. One human points at another figure that bends over away from the pointing man, in the direction of the previous panel. The pointing figure's head is similar to a head at MEL3, Panel 2, and also MEL3, Panel 3. Above him is a human figure that walks with its arms slightly away from the body (in the zombie posture like at MEL3, Panel 2). High above is a running figure painted in a darker pigment. To the lower right are more eland, some amorphous and superimposed on each other. One may be vertically orientated. One of the eland is a beautifully painted shaded polychrome that faces toward the next panel. Two hartebeest without horns jump away from the direction of the next panel, as if coming out of the junction between the current panel and the next. One overlies a rhebok and the other appears to be superimposed by an eland. A crack runs through the second hartebeest. A piece of bone is wedged in the junction between the two surfaces.

Panel 6

This panel is on a surface that juts out from the main surface and is perpendicular to the previous panel. It features at least three running figures with bows and quivers, and at least three shaded polychrome eland, one of which has too many legs.

Panel 7

Around the corner to the right of the previous panel, the images on Panel 7 are not well preserved. The midsection of a human figure is flanked by two sticks or bows. To the right, the torso of a very large human figure or therianthrope terminates indistinguishably. It is superimposed in the bottom right corner by the rear end of an antelope.

Panel 8

This panel continues all the themes of human-animal interaction and

therianthropy. There are eland, rhebok and hartebeest. One hartebeest has a red line that is thin coming out of its nose (Figure 4.4A). There is a line of male human figures that are erect and point with one finger. They seem to interact with the hartebeest. Another group of human figures is clad in karosses. One human figure kneels and shoots a bow. A trance-buck is present and a thin red line comes out of the top of its head. One of its hands is shaped almost like a bird's head. Two other figures face each other as if mirrored through an S-curve (one figure being upside down) and appear to point at each other arm to arm. Some of the human figures higher up are barely visible yet the white of their faces has preserved. In the upper right of the panel, a tall black figure has a read head and white face. The bodies of the hartebeest appear to be rubbed, though it may not be exclusive to these images (Figure 4.4). There are many other human and antelope images here in complex relationships of superpositioning. The panel is well persevered and is worth a full tracing.

Panel 9

The surface is parallel to Panel 3. Only three images are visible and they are of three shaded polychrome eland (Figure 5.19). All three are painted close to the perpendicular junction of the rock surface. Two of the eland have crossed back legs. One is upside-down. The middle eland is painted as if it were running upwards and away. There are some human figures painted on the perpendicular rock face to the left of Panel 9 but their details were not visible in the direct sunlight.

MEL12

MEL12 has two small panels. Most of the rock surface at this site is exposed and not well protected from the elements, particularly from sunlight.

The right panel is noticeable by the faded red body of an eland. Little else is still visible. Some faded human figures painted in white and with a single stroke of the brush to represent each limb and the body are partially visible.

The left panel is distinguishable by a cluster of paintings in a dark pigment near a black region of the rock face. It was not immediately obvious what the images depicted but DStretch© enhancements later revealed that they are of antelope (probably rhebok) painted as if running down diagonally. Smears of red paint are visible underneath this panel.

APPENDIX B: SITE MEASUREMENTS

Table 1: The length, depth, and height measurements for each site

Site	Length (m)	Depth (m)	Height (m)
MEL1	13.4	1.5	1.8
MEL2 (N)	1.9	0.5	0.7
MEL2 (S)	0.5	0.5	1
MEL3	7	2.8	2
MEL4	8.9	4.2	6.2
MEL5 (N)	4.8	2.6	1.8
MEL5 (S)	11.9	2.3	1.6
MEL6 (N)	8.8	3.9	3.4
MEL6 (S)	3.7	2.1	1.9
MEL7	18.3	5	5.4
MEL12	5.3	1.8	3.8

APPENDIX C: SCHEMATIC DIAGRAMS

Scaled schematic diagrams of each site are presented here in numerical order.

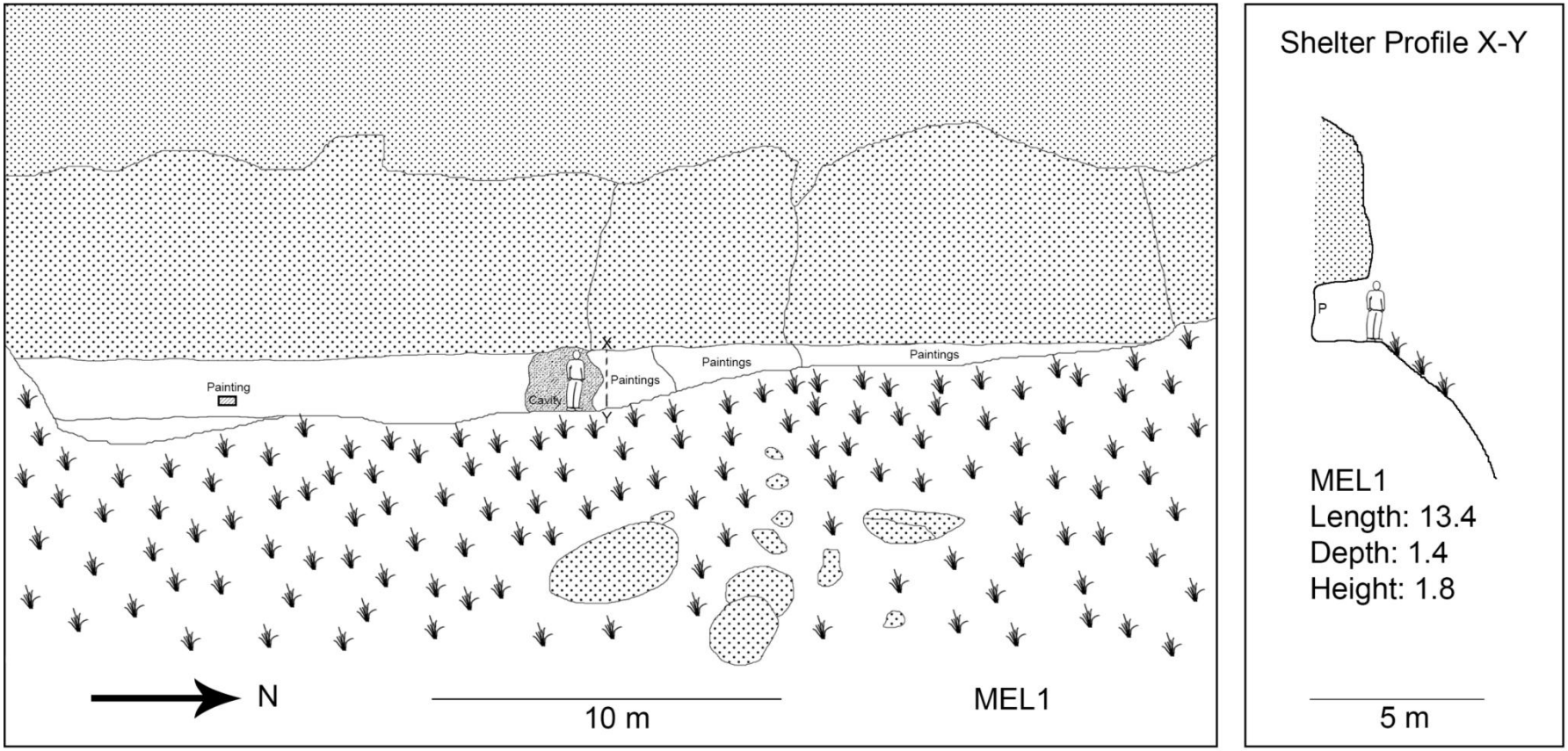


Figure C.1. Diagram of MEL1

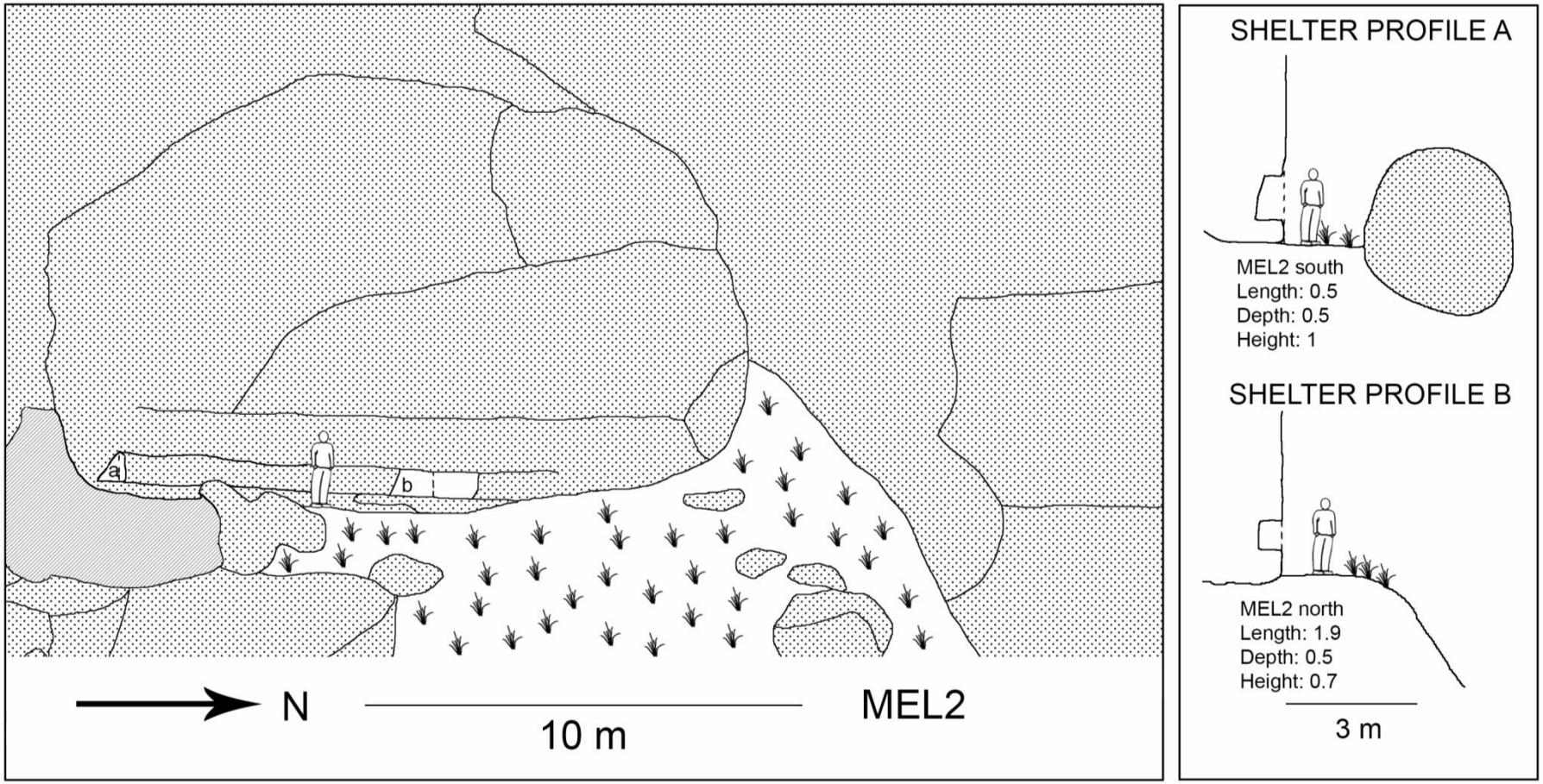


Figure C.2. Diagram of MEL2

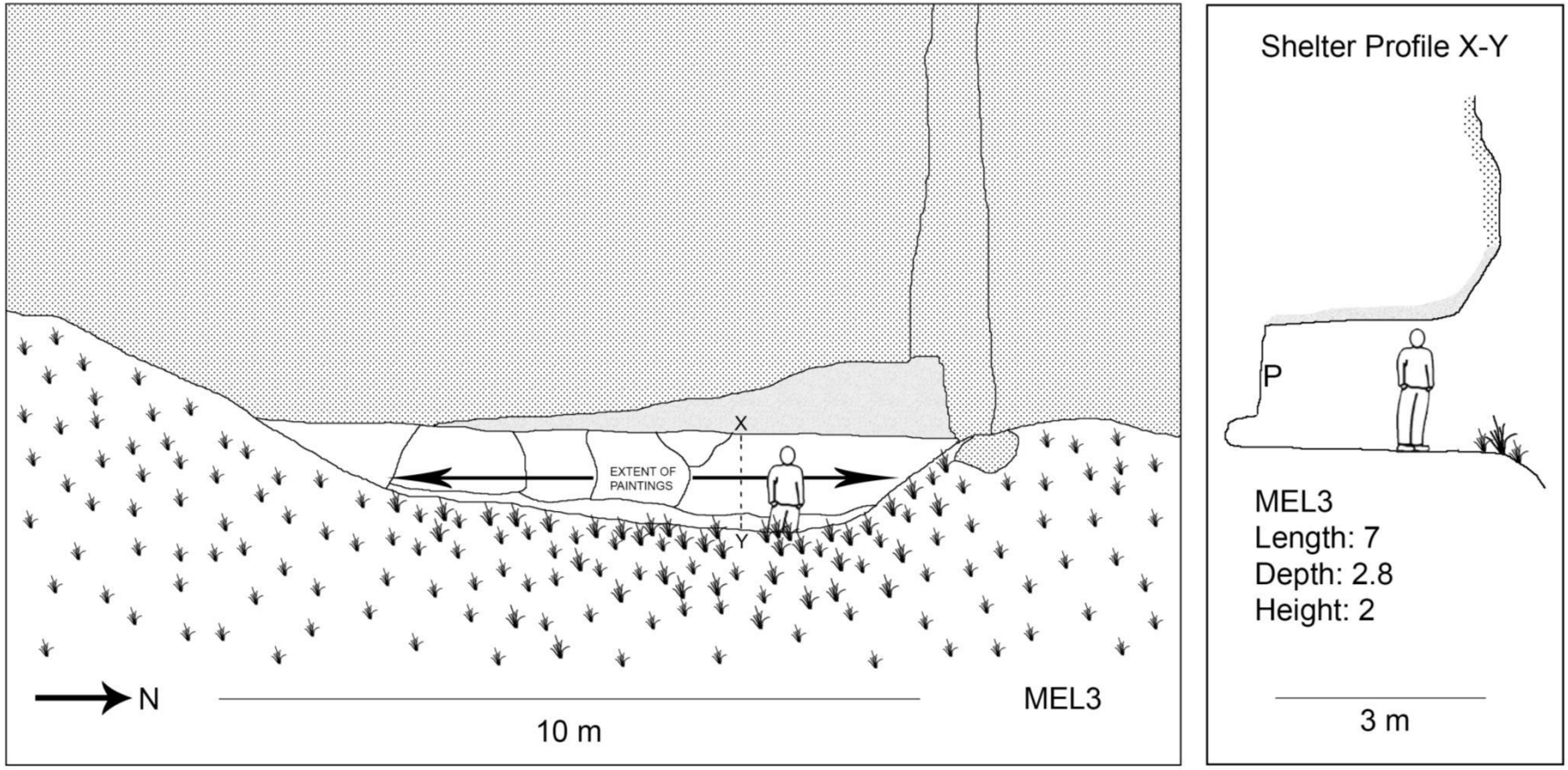


Figure C.3. Diagram of MEL3

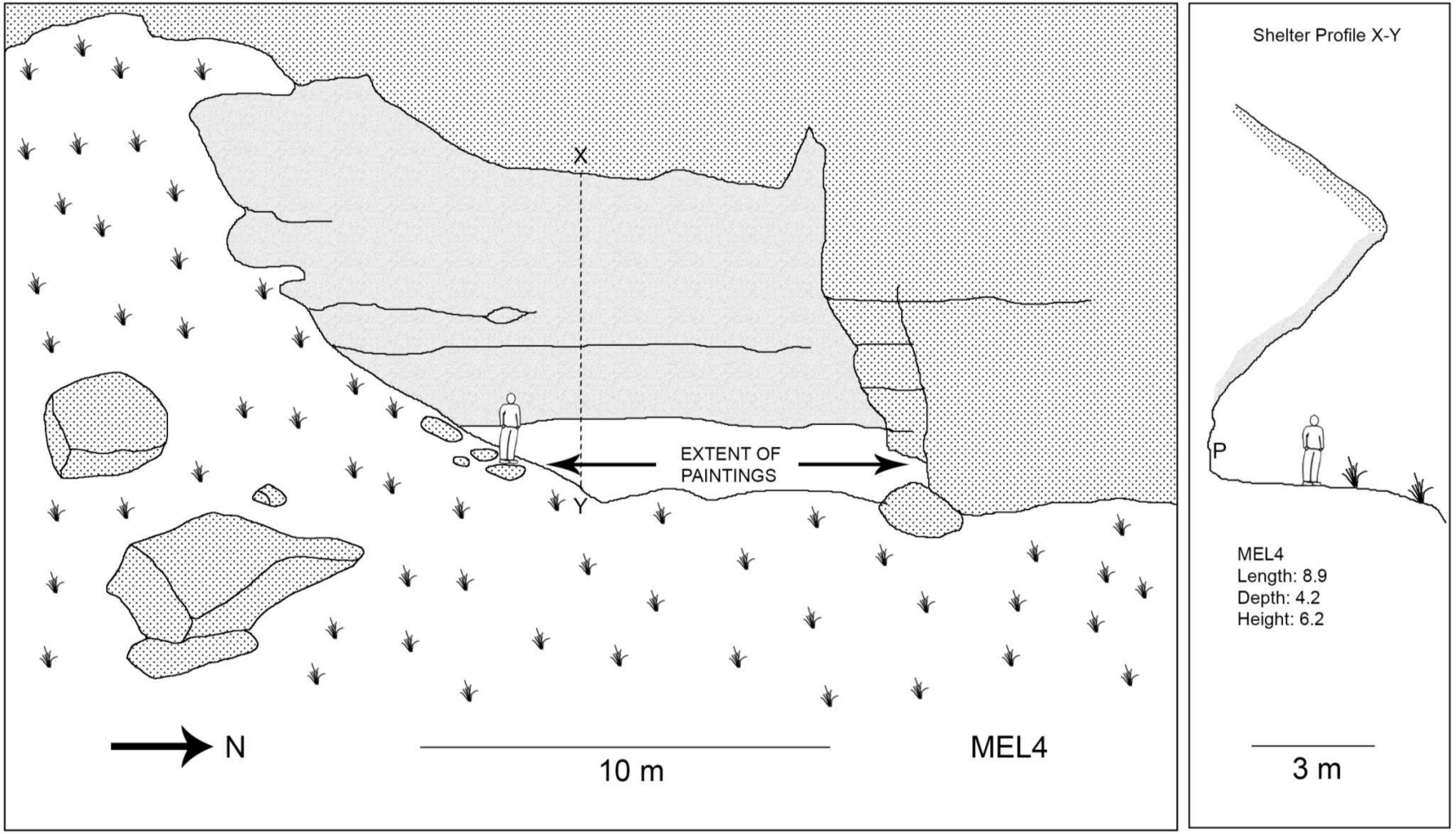


Figure C.4. Diagram of MEL4

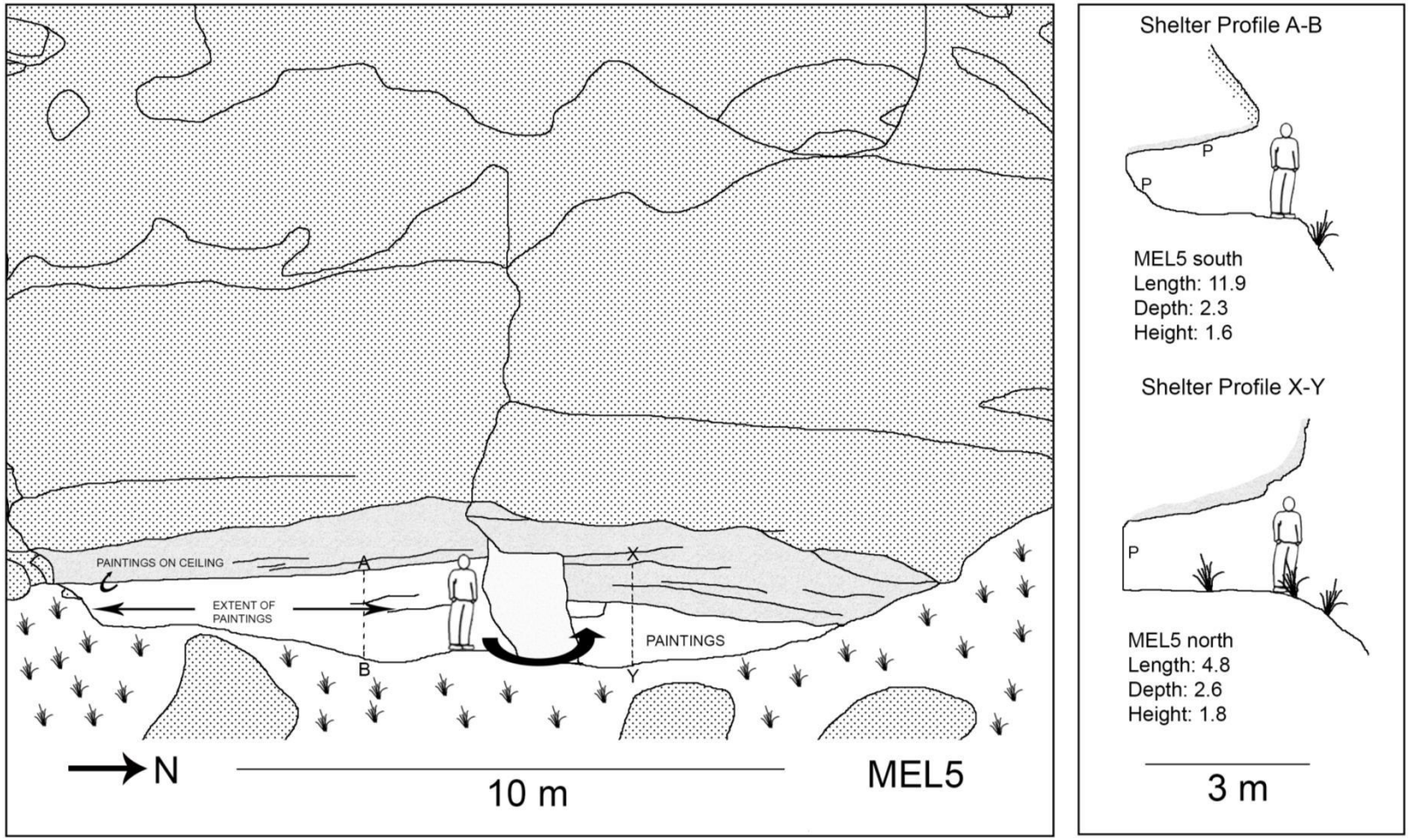


Figure C.5. Diagram of MEL5

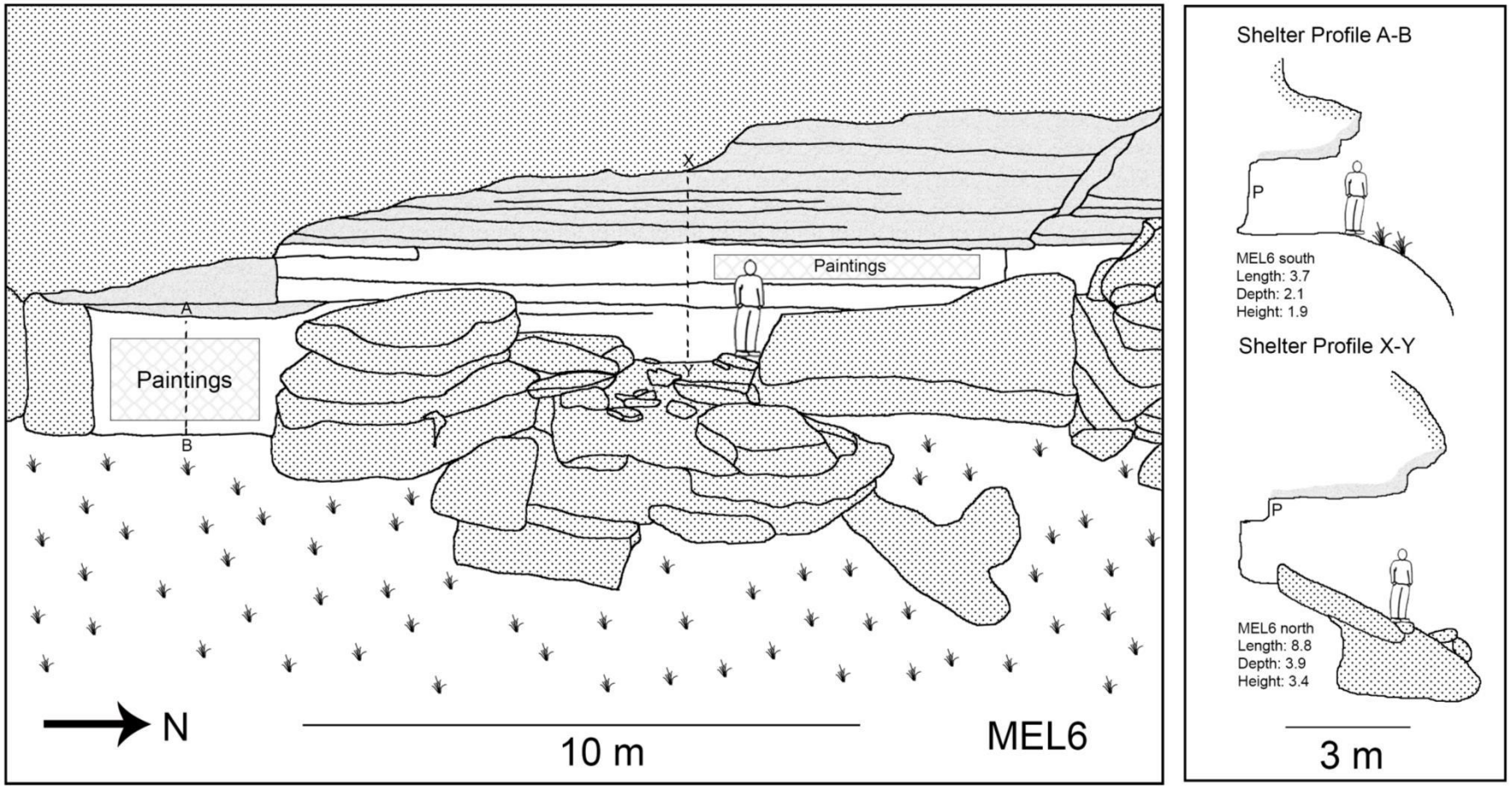


Figure C.6. Diagram of MEL6

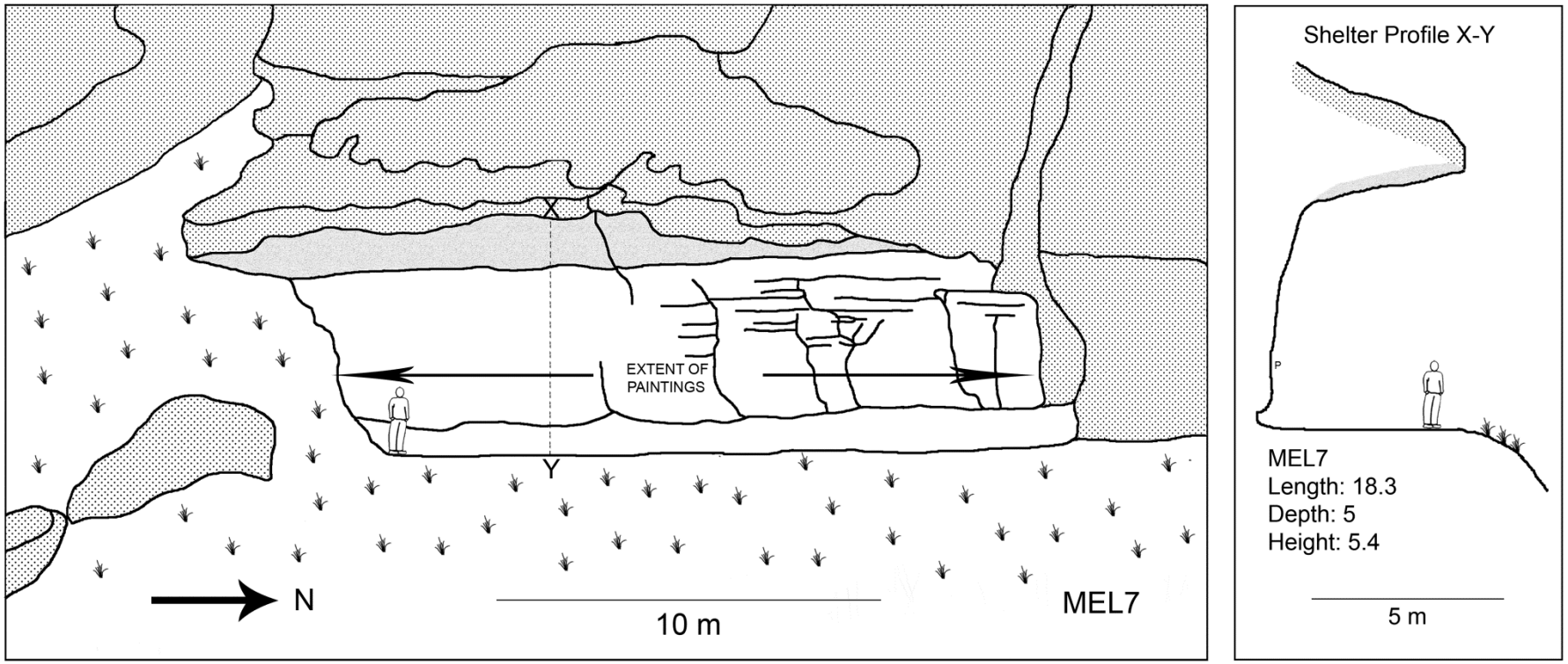


Figure C.7. Diagram of MEL7

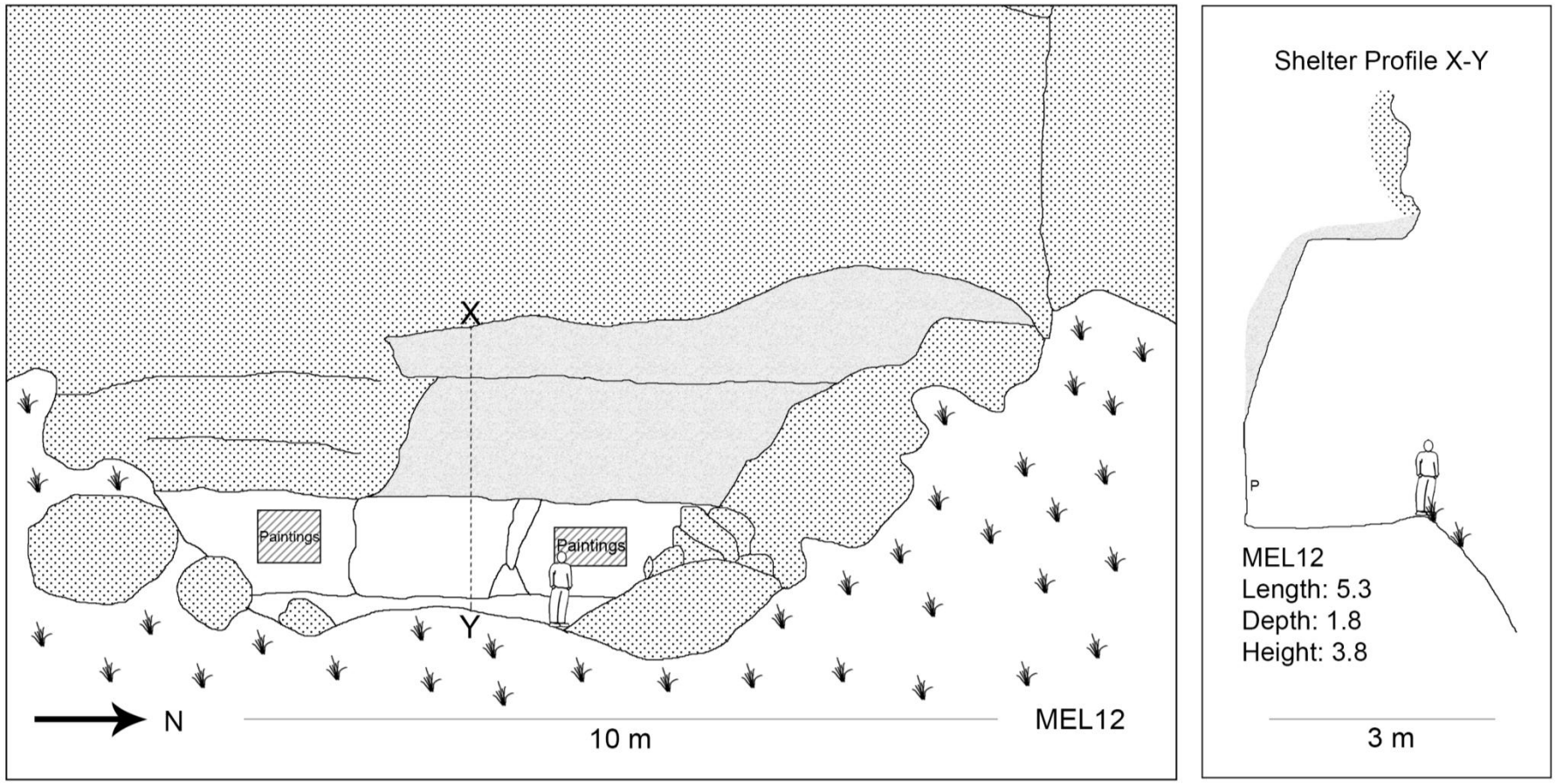


Figure C.8. Diagram of MEL12

APPENDIX D: IMAGE COUNTS

Images are traditionally counted on site by viewing the rock face without enhancements, but because digital enhancements reveal more than the naked eye can see and also require digital photographs, it was deemed faster and more accurate to count the images from the enhanced photographs than to count the images at the rock face with the enhancements present on site. It is crucial, however, in a dissertation that prioritises the performance quality of rock art, to note that indices of images from each site can only ever be estimates of the number of images at those sites as some may not have preserved. What is more, image categories remain wholly etic. Though some subject matter may be recognizable to us, it is impossible to know, due to the nature of polysemic symbols, whether two rhebok should be classified in the same category or separately.

In the table below, basic image categories have been used. Where painted scenes are particularly detailed, such as in the dance scene at MEL6 north, peripheral equipment associated with human figures was counted. In other situations, such equipment was not counted because it is part of the painted image of the human figure.

Table 2: Counts of MR images per site per basic image category

IMAGE TYPE	MEL1	MEL2	MEL3	MEL4	MEL5	MEL6	MEL7	MEL12
Animal (indeterminate)	1	1	3	6	2	1	8	4
Animal (non-real)					1	2	3	
Bag (conical)				7		5		
Bag (long tassels)						35		
Bag (round)	1			6				
Bag (short tassels)						5		
Bow				4				
Digging stick						6		
Eland	59	6	34	7	34		78	1
Feline	1						1	
Finger smear					1		1	
Flywhisk						9		
Footprint						4		
Hartebeest			1				13	
Hoof prints							1	
Human	148	13	103	44	147	24	131	2
Indeterminate Antelope	4		4	1	20	3	35	1
Indeterminate Line					3		4	
Indeterminate Plant			1					
Indeterminate Shape		1	6	30	12	34	25	5
Indeterminate Winged				1		1	1	
Isolated human legs				8				
Line	5			8		17	1	
Mongoose					1			
Quiver	1				12	2		
Rhebok	69		27		21		23	6
Serpent			1			2		
Stick						7		
Swarm of termites			1					
Therianthrope	2		2	1		20	7	
Thin red line	1		1		1		2	
TOTAL (1405)	292	21	184	123	255	177	334	19

APPENDIX E: DIGITAL ENHANCEMENT PROCEDURES

Both procedures that are summarised here were initially shared with me by Jeremy Hollmann during consultation with him in 2016 and 2017. The aim of the procedures detailed here is in each case to produce enhanced digital photographs that show a final image that is clearer and has better colour than the original photograph.

It is critically important to note that every image is different and will require different processes at each step. The most important factor, however, is the quality of the photographs. It is crucial to use a high-end camera with a good lens. The camera should always be mounted on a tripod. The ISO should be set to 100 and the format of the pictures to RAW. The depth of field should be small with the aperture between 8 and 16. The shutter speeds should also be slow.

PROCEDURE 1

This procedure uses Adobe Photoshop© to overlay an enhancement produced in DStretch© on top of the original photograph. The wild colours are desaturated during the procedure.

1. Photographs in the field were shot in RAW format. When back from the field, the original RAW images were opened using Adobe Lightroom™ and saved as a separate .tiff files. Lightroom allows for RAW images to be saved as a .jpeg or .tiff, and various adjustments to be made, such as resolution and pixel size.

2. Original images can be ‘tested’ in DStretch© to see if there is anything in the image that is worth a more detailed and time-consuming enhancement. For the initial phase, an original image was saved as a .jpeg and opened in DStretch© because DStretch© processes .jpegs faster than other formats. For the final phase the .tiff format is used. DStretch© reveals ‘invisible’ details,

i.e. what the camera is able to pick up but that is not visible to the naked eye.

3. DStretch© features 8 pre-programmed algorithms (colour spaces) for red, some for black and white (see DStretch© workflow by Gary Hein at http://www.dstretch.com/Examples.html). One way to begin the process is to cycle through the different colour spaces and to find the one that works best for a specific image. Each colour space will enhance different colours differently, and will also produce a lot of 'noise'. Expert mode allows for the reduction of some of the 'noise' and also allows the user to 'fiddle' with different settings.

4. When the best enhancement is found, the DStretch© image should be saved as a .jpeg during the experimental stage or a .tiff at the final stage. The DStretch© image, which will have wild colours and a lot of 'noise', can then be opened in Adobe Lightroom™ and developed: the adjustment of highlights, blacks, whites and saturation is key at this stage to tame the wild colours.

5. In the next step, both the original unenhanced image and the adjusted DStretch© image are opened in Adobe Photoshop™. The DStretch© image should be placed on top of the original as a separate layer.

6. The most time-consuming step consists of blending the two images using the 'Blending Options' in Photoshop. There are many options for blending including 'Dissolve', 'Multiply', 'Darken', as well as tools to control how pats of the image blend. This procedure typically works best when the rock painting was carried out a red pigment so that the enhancement shows clear reds (from DStretch©) but the rock looks natural (from the underlying original image). The blended layers can be saved as a third image.

7. In the final step, the third image from the previous step can be opened in Lightroom and tweaked again in the 'Develop Mode'. The reds may be garish and it may be necessary to adjust the saturation. The eye-dropper tool can be used to tone specific reds.

PROCEDURE 2

Procedure 2 uses the LAB colour space in Adobe Photoshop™. Some RGB colour space filters are not available in LAB. In order to use them without compressing the image, two separate images are worked with and grouped together at the end.

1. As with Procedure 1, images were shot in RAW in the field and converted to .tiffs in Adobe Lightroom™.

2. The original .tiff image was opened in Photoshop. When this is done, the default colour space of the image is RGB (under Image > Mode).

3. The next step was to right click on the image and 'Duplicate' it into a second and tab in Photoshop. A pop-up window allows one to rename this duplicate.

4. At this stage, there are two tabs of the same original image. The colour space of the second image can be changed to LAB colour (Image>Mode>LAB).

5. The 'Levels' and the 'Curves' in the LAB image can then be adjusted until the rock paintings are discernible from the rock face. It is possible to work with only one of the channels of the LAB colour space, namely L, A or B, and produce a grey scale image or particular clarity for the colours in that channel. More on LAB adjustments can be read about in Margulis (2005).

6. The layers in the LAB colour space can then converted to a 'Smart Object' by right clicking on the layers in the Layers panel and selecting the 'Covert to Smart Object' option.

7. The 'Smart Object' can then be duplicated back into the other tab that is in the RGB colour space. This allows for further adjustments to be made, such as the use of the 'Selective Colour' filter to adjust specific colours, which is not possible in the LAB colour space. It is not necessary to keep the original photograph in the RGB colour space as a visible layer.

8. The final step of this process is to save the visible layers in the RGB colour space as a .tiff image.

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