

Inhabiting the imagination (Ugo Tonietti)

For around two million years, the various *homo* species have distinguished themselves by their ability to create survival tools. Emblematic of this exceptional ability is the flint, which we would like to trace back to the management of the useful, the necessary (which also distinguishes us from other living beings).

However, since the appearance of *sapiens* (the only species not to have become extinct), another singular capacity has become evident, which can be traced back to the sphere of requirements: the imaginative and creative capacity, condensed in artistic production, pervasive from 80000 years ago.

The presentation proposes the images of flint and rock painting to identify two dimensions that characterise us and with which we have to deal daily.

A pre-historic and nomadic beginning, very promising and likely female-led (her skills in singing, in caring for her inept offspring, in painting on rock) was succeeded, with sedentarity, by the imposition of the sphere of necessity and inequality: human societies have chosen the rationality of accumulation, hierarchy, the exclusion of women, aggression.

Have we lost forever that lightness and expressiveness, which were feminine, playful, and social?

Which of us actually live with creative and imaginative elements in our existence? Alas, only artists, relegated to dedicated, and looked at with suspicious, reserves...

The work, following suggestions derived from experiences in poor and quite primitive contexts, suggests that the dimension of everyday creativity did not disappear with the end of the Neolithic period, but is to be found in societies in which women in particular give life to exceptional imaginative representations, in the art of textiles and wall painting, jewellery and music-dance.

Sensational experiences, of unaware protagonists not subject to the deadly cultural superstructures that characterise, with violent narratives, our evolved societies dominated by the split between body and mind, night and day, conscious and unconscious, woman and man.

A roundup of this imaginative production attempts to restore the profound sense that marked our first appearance on the planet.