

GOBIERNO DEL PRINCIPADO DE ASTURIAS

LOCATION: El Mazo, Peñamellera Baja District.

DIRECTIONS: From Oviedo, take the A-8 and then the N-621 towards Santander. At Unquera take the N-621 to Panes.

CO-ORDINATES: 43.33158,-4.55927

OPENING TIMES: Easter holiday and mid-June to mid-September.
Mondays closed.

VISITS: Pre-booking recommended.

No children under 7 years.

INFORMATION AND BOOKING: 985 414 008 Peñamellera Baja Local Council (Ayuntamiento).
985 414 297 Panes Tourist Office.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Wear warm clothing and suitable footwear. Not recommended for persons with reduced vision or reduced mobility. Visitors are asked to be punctual.

• Didactic Workshop / Presentation Centre.



COLLECTION DESIGN: Kalatos s.l.

PHOTOGRAPHS: Juanjo Arrojo y José A. Fdez. de Córdoba

ENGRAVING: H. Breuil

PRINTING: Gráficas La Morgal

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DESCRIPTION OF THE CAVE

The cave is on the right bank of the Cares-Deva River, at the base of a rocky outcrop. It is about 100 metres long and its art work is to be found in the middle section of the gallery. At the end of the cave there two siphons which bear the names of Breuil and Mengaud, two of those who discovered the cave. The other discoverer, Alcalde del Río, lent his name to the main gallery.

In the same river basin we can also visit the important Cave of El Pindal (Pimiango, Ribadedeva).



DISCOVERY AND INVESTIGATION

La Loja was discovered on 23rd August 1908, only months after the discovery of the El Pindal Cave (the first cave to have been discovered in Asturias that contained Palaeolithic Art) by Hermilio Alcalde del Rio, Henri Breuil and Louis Mengaud during the explorations that this group of pioneering prehistoric researchers conducted in the eastern part of Asturias and the west of Cantabria. Archaeological excavations have revealed few clues about the people who occupied and decorated the cave.

In 1920 the Count of La Vega del Sella (an important Asturian pre-historian) carried out an excavation at the cave entrance which revealed a single archaeological level: the stone and bone materials found here were identified as being from the transition phase between the end of the late Magdalenian period and the Aziliense period (13.500-10.500 BP- *before present*).



Main Panel. Copy of the Engravings [H. Breuil]



Main panel. Group of engravings on black background [J.A.]

ART IN THE LA LOJA CAVE

The cave's artistic content begins in the area of half light at the entrance: here we can see blurred red markings which have been identified as a possible sign.

The main area of art work, known as the *Panel of Engravings*, is on the right hand wall of the gallery, about 40 m from the entrance and 4 m above the cave floor, from where it can be clearly observed.

The engravings were made on a layer of black manganese that covers the wall, which enables the engraved lines to stand out against the dark background.

This layer, while it makes the engravings more spectacular, has also contributed to its deterioration: small scale-like fragments have fallen away and part of the engravings have been lost in this way.

On this panel we can make out six quadrupeds, some of which are difficult to identify due to the state of deterioration of the wall as well as to the lack of anatomical definition.

The three central representations are bovine figures; there are also two figures which may be horses (one above and the other in the centre) and another badly deteriorated and indeterminate animal shape.

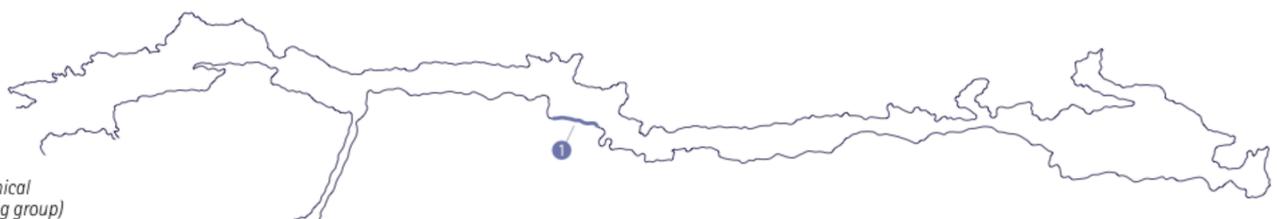
Five of the figures are complete while one is only represented by its head, although the carefully executed outline enables the spectator to visualise the whole shape.

The La Loja Panel has a marked narrative character in that it appears to simulate a herd on the move. This simulation is enhanced by the fact that the figures are facing exactly the same way and by the sense of perspective achieved by superimposing the engravings on each other.

Red traces in the entrance area [J.A.]



1 Panel of engravings



Plan (according to topographical study of the "Polifemo" caving group)