

Drawing is for us, rational minds that we are, a human sign *par excellence*: when we see the profile of a bison drawn on the wall of a cave, we know right away that a person has been there. But if a dreamer believes that nature is an artist, that nature paints and draws, could she not just as well sculpt a statue in stone as mold it in flesh? The rêveries of the intimate powers of matter extend this far in Fabre's mind (p. 305): "I saw in the grottos and caves of the earth, in Languedoc near Sorège, in a cave commonly called the Tranc del Caleil, the most perfect lines of sculpture that one could wish to see; those who are most curious can go and see them, they will see a thousand sorts of figures inserted in and attached to the rocks, which ravish the sight of their viewers. No sculptor ever entered there to cut and chisel an image... Which ought to convince us that Nature is endowed with the gifts and with the marvellous knowledge that her Creator gave her in order to execute her work in diverse ways, as she does in all sorts of materials..." Nor let it be said, Fabre continues, that this is the work of subterranean demons. The time is past for belief in artisan gnomes. No! One must attend to the evidence and attribute the aesthetic activity to the substances themselves, to the intimate powers of matter (p. 305): "There are subtle, celestial, igneous, and aerial substances residing in the general spirit of the world, which have the virtue and the power to dispose this spirit into all sorts of figures and forms that the matter might wish to take on; sometimes lying outside of the genus and the species in which the figure is ordinarily found, like the figure of a bull, or whatever other animal figure one might imagine, found in marble, stone, or wood: these figures depend on the natural virtue of the Architectonic spirits that are in Nature."