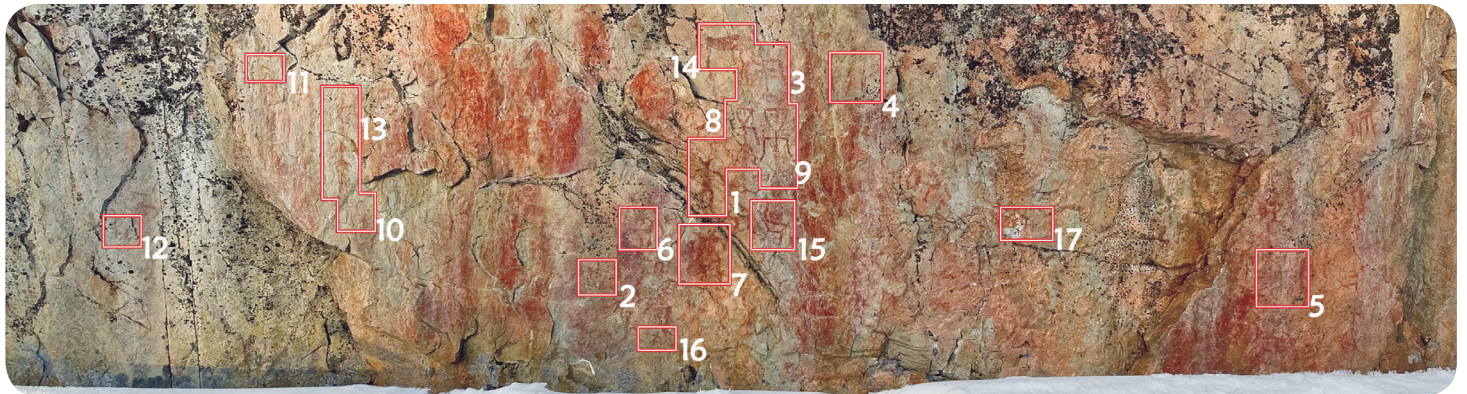




Set off on a mystical trip back in time! The Värikallio Cliffs in Hossa are located close to the border of Suomussalmi and Kuusamo, in the northern part of the Hossa Hiking Area. Located along a water route that was used in ancient times, the rock paintings portray the life of people at a time when spirits and natural forces were present everywhere. More than sixty different figures have been identified on the rock, and they have been painted, using a mix of blood and red ochre. The pictures, most likely, deal with hunting or shamanism.



## Northern Worldview

Rock painting sites have generally been regarded as the community's meeting places. The pictures have been interpreted in many ways and there is no certain answer as to their role. The following interpretation is based on the oral folklore of the northern peoples and data on the traditional northern worldview.

According to this interpretation, the place where the rock paintings are located depicts the universe. The vertical rock wall that goes directly into the water represents the world inhabited by human beings. The water leads to Tuonela, the realm of the dead. The sky opening above the precipice represents a place inhabited by spirits. The rock paintings have been done on the spot where the sky, the land and Tuonela unite. Almost thirty figures resemble people. Portraying people was not random; the details counted and pictures were not painted of just anybody.

### HORNED SHAMANS (1 – 4)

- The horned figures perhaps represented shamans from the ancestral figures.
- The two horned figure (1) seems to be dancing and it could be a shaman in a trance. The other figures (2-4) are more stylised.

### MEN AND WOMEN (5 - 7)

- Left and right were seen as sexual opposites. Left pictures woman, right pictures man. One figure (5) has the left arm raised, which can mean she is a woman. Two figures

(6 and 7) have the right arm raised, which can mean they are men.

### DEAD SHAMAN (8)

- The lack of a hand or eye meant that death had harvested that person. The figure (8) is missing their left hand as well as an eye. There is a long line between the legs. Traditionally, a line visible between the legs was interpreted as being phallic. On the other hand, the lines leading from between these legs have been considered as images of birth.

### SHAMAN (9) AND SWAN

- In the traditional northern belief system, the large water birds acted as messengers between people and the spirit world. The birds helped shamans on their spirit voyages. A swan is pictured on the shoulder of the shaman (8).

### PEOPLE-LIKE ANIMAL FIGURES, ANIMAL-PEOPLE SPIRIT FIGURES (10 - 12)

- After the human figures, elk form the second largest group in the pictorial motifs of Värikallio. The small elk (10 and 11) have human-like feet, the creature lying down (12) also resembles a person. All of the figures can be seen as spirits of animal-people forms. They can move between the different worlds.

### CREATURES CLIMBING UPWARDS (13)

- The lower picture has the face of a spirit being which shows the nose, but not the

eyes. On the right hand side of the face is a small elk figure, there is a bird above the face. This possibly depicts the shaman's journey to the hereafter with his helping spirit. Above the bird there is a bridging queue of different figures among which an elk, a person and possibly a bear can be identified.

### ELK (14 AND 15)

- The myth of the heavenly elk hunt and the hunting rites associated with it were widely known in the northern half of the globe. The elk is an ancestor that follows the sun. Only one of the creatures (15) has antlers. However, it might be a picture of a deer. Most of the elk are depicted in groups.

### OTTERS (16 AND 17)

- Many Siberian peoples have regarded the otter as a powerful spirit, the master of water and the underworld. Its cunning and dexterity were admired. There are two figures (16 and 17), that can be interpreted as otters.

### More information:

- Hossa Visitor Centre, Jatkonsalmentie 6, 89920 Ruutinansalmi, tel. +358 (0)40 751 7221
- [outdoors.fi/hossa](http://outdoors.fi/hossa), [excursionmap.fi](http://excursionmap.fi)
- Services at the Hossa area: [www.hossa.fi](http://www.hossa.fi)

*Metsähallitus 4/2015, Erweko Oy, 2015*





Hossa

# Värikallio



Retkeilyalue - National Hiking Area  
 Suojelualue - Protected Area  
 Tie - Road  
 Polku - Hiking trail  
 Polku - Hiking trail  
 Hiihtolatu - Skiing track  
 Melontareitti - Canoeing trail  
 Moottorikelkkareitti - Snowmobile track  
 Pysäköinti - Parking  
 Opastus - Information  
 Kota - Lapp hut  
 Laavu - Lean-to shelter  
 Tulentekopaikka - Open fire place  
 Käymälä - Dry toilet  
 Nähtävyyks - Sight  
 Venekuljetus - Boat transportation  
 Kesäkahvila - Café, open in summertime  
 Linja-autojen pysäköintipaikka - Parking place for buses

0 0,5 km

© Metsähallitus 2015 © Maanmittauslaitos 1/MML/15



[outdoors.fi](http://outdoors.fi) [excursionmap.fi](http://excursionmap.fi)

 **Vipuvoimaa**  
 EU:lta  
 2007-2013

European unioni  
 Euroopan aluekehitysrahasto

 **METSÄHALLITUS**