



THROUGH
ARTISTS' EYES

The Living World

Jane Bingham

THROUGH
ARTISTS' EYES

The Living World

江苏工业学院图书馆
藏书章

Jane Bingham

 Raintree



www.raintreepublishers.co.uk

Visit our website to find out more information about **Raintree** books.

To order:

☎ Phone 44 (0) 1865 888113

📠 Send a fax to 44 (0) 1865 314091

💻 Visit the Raintree bookshop at **www.raintreepublishers.co.uk** to browse our catalogue and order online.

First published in Great Britain by Raintree, Halley Court, Jordan Hill, Oxford OX2 8EJ, part of Harcourt Education.

Raintree is a registered trademark of Harcourt Education Ltd.

© Harcourt Education Ltd 2006

The moral right of the proprietor has been asserted.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without either the prior written permission of the publishers or a licence permitting restricted copying in the United Kingdom issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd, 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W1T 4LP (www.cla.co.uk).

Editorial: Isabel Thomas and Rosie Gordon
Design: Richard Parker & Tinstar Design www.tinstar.com
Picture Research: Hannah Taylor and Zoe Spilberg
Production: Duncan Gilbert

Originated by Chroma Graphics
Printed and bound in China by South China Printing Company

10-digit ISBN 1 406 20152 9
13-digit ISBN 978 1 4062 0151 2

10 09 08 07 06
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Bingham, Jane
The living world. - (Through artists' eyes)
1. Nature in art - Juvenile literature 2. Art - History - Juvenile literature
I. Title
704.9'43

Acknowledgements

The publishers would like to thank the following for permission to reproduce photographs: **p. 27**, © 1990, Photo Scala, Florence- courtesy of the Ministero Beni e Att. Culturali; **p. 35**, © 1990, Photo Scala, Florence/ Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Neue Pinakothek Munich; **p. 8**, © 1990, Photo Scala, Florence/ Louvre; **p. 31**, © 1990, Photo Scala, Florence/ Louvre; **p. 28**, © 1990, Photo Scala, Florence/ Musee de Cluny; **p. 36**, © 1990, Photo Scala, Florence/ Musei Capitolini; **p. 24**, © 2003, Photo Scala, Florence/ HIP; **p. 12**, © 2004, Photo Scala, Florence/ HIP; **p. 45**, © ARS, NY and DACS, London 2006 Photo: © Art Resource, NY; **p. 41**, © Jeff Koons; **p. 47**, © Succession H. Matisse/ DACS 2006 Photo: Bridgeman Art Library/ Pushkin Museum, Moscow, Russia; **p. 43**, © Succession Picasso/ DACS 2006 Photo: © 1990, Photo Scala, Florence; **p. 23**, Alamy Images/ Michael Grant; **p. 18**, Ancient Art & Architecture Collection Ltd/ C.M. Dixon; **p. 13**, Ancient Egypt Picture Library/Robert Partridge; **pp. 7, 11** Axel Poignant Archive; **p. 30**, Bodleian Library, Oxford; Bridgeman Art Library pp. **33, 37; 9** (Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, UK), **15**, (Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery), **44**, (British Library, UK), **14**, (British Museum, London, UK), **49**, (Ca' Rezzonico, Museo del Settecento, Venice, Alinari), **17**, (Dinodia), **4**, (National Gallery, London, UK), **34**, (Private Collection), **40**, (Private Collection), **46**, (Private Collection, © Bonhams, London UK), **48** (Private Collection, Lauros/ Giraudon), **51**, (Private Collection, Roger Perrin), **39**, (Saarland Museum, Saarbrücken, Germany), **38**, (Stapleton Collection, UK); **p. 26**, E & E Picture Library/ Ken Murrell; **p. 5**, MirrorPix; **p. 29**, Science Photo Library/ Matt Johnston; **p. 20**, The Art Archive / Bodleian Library Oxford / The Bodleian Library; **p. 21**, Werner Forman Archive/ Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver; **p. 19**, Werner Forman Archive/ N.J.Saunders. **Cover: Elephant, Horse and Cow**, 1914 (oil on canvas), Marc, Franz (1880-1916) reproduced with permission of Bridgeman Art Library/ Private Collection.

The publishers would like to thank Karen Hosack for her assistance in the preparation of this book.

Every effort has been made to contact copyright holders of any material reproduced in this book. Any omissions will be rectified in subsequent printings if notice is given to the publishers.

The paper used to print this book comes from sustainable resources.

Contents

Introduction	4
The hunted and the hunters	6
Powerful protectors	10
Mythical creatures	20
Plants, flowers, and fruit	26
Horses, dogs, and cattle	36
Cats, birds, and fish	42
Exotic creatures	48
Animal stories and characters	50
Map and Further reading	52
Timeline	53
Glossary	54
Index	56

Any words that appear in bold, **like this**, are explained in the glossary.

Introduction

A storm races through the forest, ruffling the grasses and leaves. There is a feeling of danger and excitement... and then you spot the tiger... Surprise!

The tiger is crouched ready to pounce. Its eyes are staring wildly and its fangs are bared. Even though you realize that this is not exactly how a real tiger looks, you still feel the power of the magnificent beast.

The French artist Henri Rousseau painted *Tiger in a Tropical Storm (Surprised!)* in 1891. It was the first of many images of animals in the jungle.

Rousseau was a self-taught artist who loved to visit the animals in the zoo. He also spent hours studying the tropical plants in the botanical gardens in Paris. All his paintings share the same sense

of wonder at the mysterious world of animals and plants.

Henri Rousseau's tiger is not **realistic** in several ways. Its tail is too long and curly. Its eyes are too big and round, and its mouth is too red. But his picture helps us to imagine the secret world of the tiger. It also makes us think about the artist who painted it. Why did Rousseau choose to show the tiger the way he did? How did he feel about the tiger and what about the unseen creature that it is about to attack? (Rousseau later explained that the tiger was preparing to surprise a human explorer.)

Like many other images in this book, Henri Rousseau's painting aims to capture the spirit of the mysterious creatures that share our planet.



Henri Rousseau, *Tiger in a Tropical Storm (Surprised!)* (1891). This picture is painted in a childlike style, but it is still very powerful. What do you think it tells us about the artist's attitude to nature?

A range of art

This book covers a range of different **media**, including painting, **sculpture**, pottery, and **textiles**. It also includes examples of poetry and stories, photography, and film. Some of the works discussed here are by famous figures, such as Pablo Picasso, but many were produced by lesser-known artists.

The book starts by looking at **prehistoric** paintings of animals, and ends with a discussion of animal characters in films.

It explores art from all over the world. To help you see exactly where a work of art was made, there is a map of the world at the end of the book, on page 52. The timeline on page 53 provides an overview of the different periods of history discussed in the book.

For thousands of years, artists have created images of animals and plants. These images are very varied, but they all express their artist's delight at the living world around them.



Dancers perform a traditional Lion Dance to celebrate the Chinese New Year. Their colourful costume doesn't look at all like a real lion, but the Lion Dance is still a powerful expression of the lion's wild spirit.

The hunted and the hunters

As soon as people started painting pictures, they showed animals. Paintings have been found in caves in southern France that date from around 30,000 years ago. These prehistoric pictures were painted by hunters. They show bison, deer, and wild horses.

Prehistoric animals

Animals in prehistoric paintings are simple in form, but confidently drawn. The animals are usually shown running, and seem full of life and energy. Prehistoric artists used a wide range of colours made from natural pigments including red, yellow, orange, brown, and cream. They blended these colours together very skilfully, and shaded parts of the animals' bodies so that they looked solid and real. It is clear that the early cave painters watched the creatures they painted very closely and often studied them in action.

Nobody knows exactly why the early artists made these animal paintings. The paintings may have been used as teaching aids to instruct young hunters. They may also have had a religious or magical meaning. Animal paintings in caves were probably associated with special ceremonies held before a hunt.

Animals in North Africa

Thousands of years ago, the Sahara desert in North Africa was not a desert area.

The people who lived there hunted elephants, rhinos, ostriches, and giraffes and they painted pictures of these animals on rocks. These early animal paintings date from 20,000 years ago.

Around 2000 BCE, the land in North Africa started to dry up, and the people were forced to stop being hunters. They became cattle herders instead, and their artists began to paint pictures of cattle.

San paintings and dances

Some traditional people in Africa still paint images of animals on rocks. The San people of Southern Africa have been painting elands (a type of antelope), for thousands of years. They have a special antelope dance associated with their paintings of elands. San artists say that when they paint an eland, they somehow manage to gain some of the animal's grace and power.

Natural pigments

The San people of Southern Africa use a range of natural pigments in their paintings. Red ochre is made from ground-up rock. White is made from a type of clay, and black is produced from charcoal or soot. The pigments are ground into a fine powder and mixed with a binder, such as blood or egg white, which holds the mixture together.



This Aboriginal image of a crocodile was painted on a rock in Arnhem Land, in northern Australia. Like the San people in Africa, the **Aboriginal people** of Australia have continued the ancient tradition of painting animals on rocks. The oldest rock paintings found in Australia date from around 20,000 BCE.

Ancient hunts

In many ancient civilizations, hunting was part of everyday life. Poor people hunted animals for food, while rulers went out hunting for sport. Meanwhile, painters and carvers produced accurate images of the creatures being hunted. They also showed the animals, such as dogs and horses, that helped the hunters to pursue their prey.

Carvings and paintings from Ancient Egypt show **pharaohs** in their chariots, chasing after gazelle, antelopes, and ostriches. Sometimes artists also show sleek hunting dogs running beside the pharaohs' chariots. A few Egyptian carvings show hippo hunts. Hunters stand in their boats and throw spears at the hippos, who thrash around in the water, with spears sticking out of their bodies.

A carving from the kingdom of Assyria (present-day Syria) shows the king hunting lions in his royal hunting park. These carved lions are magnificent-looking beasts with shaggy manes and powerful limbs. Lion hunts also took place in Ancient Greece. A tomb from Ancient Greece shows the hero Alexander the Great fighting a massive lion, armed only with a shield and spear. All these early images emphasize the power and size of the wild creatures being hunted.



This detail from an Assyrian carving shows King Ashurbanipal setting off on a lion hunt. The carving includes dramatic images of lions and horses in action.

Medieval hunts

Hunting was a favourite sport of medieval nobles and kings. They raced through the countryside on fast horses, following packs of hounds. Hunters chased after wild bears, deer, boars, foxes, and hares – all common animals in medieval Europe.

The hunt was a very popular subject in medieval art. Artists often painted pictures of hunts in manuscripts, and tapestries of hunts were hung on castle walls.

Medieval pictures of hunts are usually very lively. They often feature leaping deer, galloping horses, and racing dogs. The images portray a sense of the grace and speed of all these animals. In particular, they show the stag as a noble and mysterious creature.

Tapestries of hunts sometimes covered several walls. They show the main events of the hunt but also include the trees and flowers of the forest. Many hunting tapestries feature small creatures, such as squirrels, rabbits, and birds. These early images of woodland life are very detailed and carefully observed.

The hunter or the hunted?

A scene from the margins of the Ormesby Psalter, a 14th-century prayer book, shows a hunting scene with a difference. Here, a giant rabbit holds a bow and arrow, and aims at a huntsman who is running away as fast as he can. In this comic scene, the artist reverses the roles of the hunter and the hunted. Medieval artists liked to give human roles to animals. They sometimes showed a fox preaching in a church and a monkey acting as doctor.



Paolo Uccello, *Hunt in the Forest* (c. 1470). Uccello's famous painting features lively but stylized horses, hounds and deer.

Powerful protectors

Different people around the world feel very close to certain animals. They often see these creatures as powerful protectors. Some people also believe that they are descended from animals.

Animal ancestors

The Aboriginal people of Australia believe that powerful **Ancestor** Spirits created their land and everything in it. These spirits mainly took the form of animals, such as snakes, turtles, or birds. Throughout the Aboriginals' long history, their artists have produced images of the Ancestor Spirits, and Aboriginal artists today still paint pictures of their animal ancestors.

The Rainbow Serpent

One of the most powerful Ancestor Spirits is the Rainbow Serpent, a colourful, giant snake. The image of the Rainbow Serpent often appears in traditional **bark paintings**, but it is also shown in modern canvas paintings. Aboriginal artists usually show the Rainbow Serpent with a fierce, biting head and a long, gliding body, covered with patterns. In some paintings, the Rainbow Serpent is shown giving birth to the first people. Inside the serpent's body are tiny figures of men, waiting to be born.

African animal masks

In traditional African societies, people often create masks like animal heads.

They wear these masks for dances during ceremonies where they ask the animal spirits for help. The Dogon people of West Africa rely on the spirit of the antelope to help them in their daily farming work. They create rectangular antelope masks with several horns sticking out of the top. Dancers wearing the masks hit the ground with sticks. This represents the movement of an antelope pawing the ground with its hooves.

In other parts of Africa, people make a range of animal masks. The Nuna people of Burkina Faso carve masks in the shape of crocodiles, buffaloes, and hawks and call on these powerful animal spirits to keep them safe from danger. Wooden Nuna hawk masks have a carved bird's head with large staring eyes and a snout-like beak. This fierce hawk's head is flanked on either side by wide outstretched wings.

Patterns with meanings

The Nuna hawk mask is decorated with patterns that have special meanings to the Nuna people. For example, the zigzag lines on the hawk's wings represent the difficult path that their ancestors had to take through life. The chequer-board pattern of black and white shows the contrast between night and day.



In many Aboriginal paintings, animals have a magical meaning. This bark painting was created in honour of the Rainbow Serpent Spirit Ancestor. It shows four serpents wound around a man with his animals and plants. The serpents appear to be protecting the man.

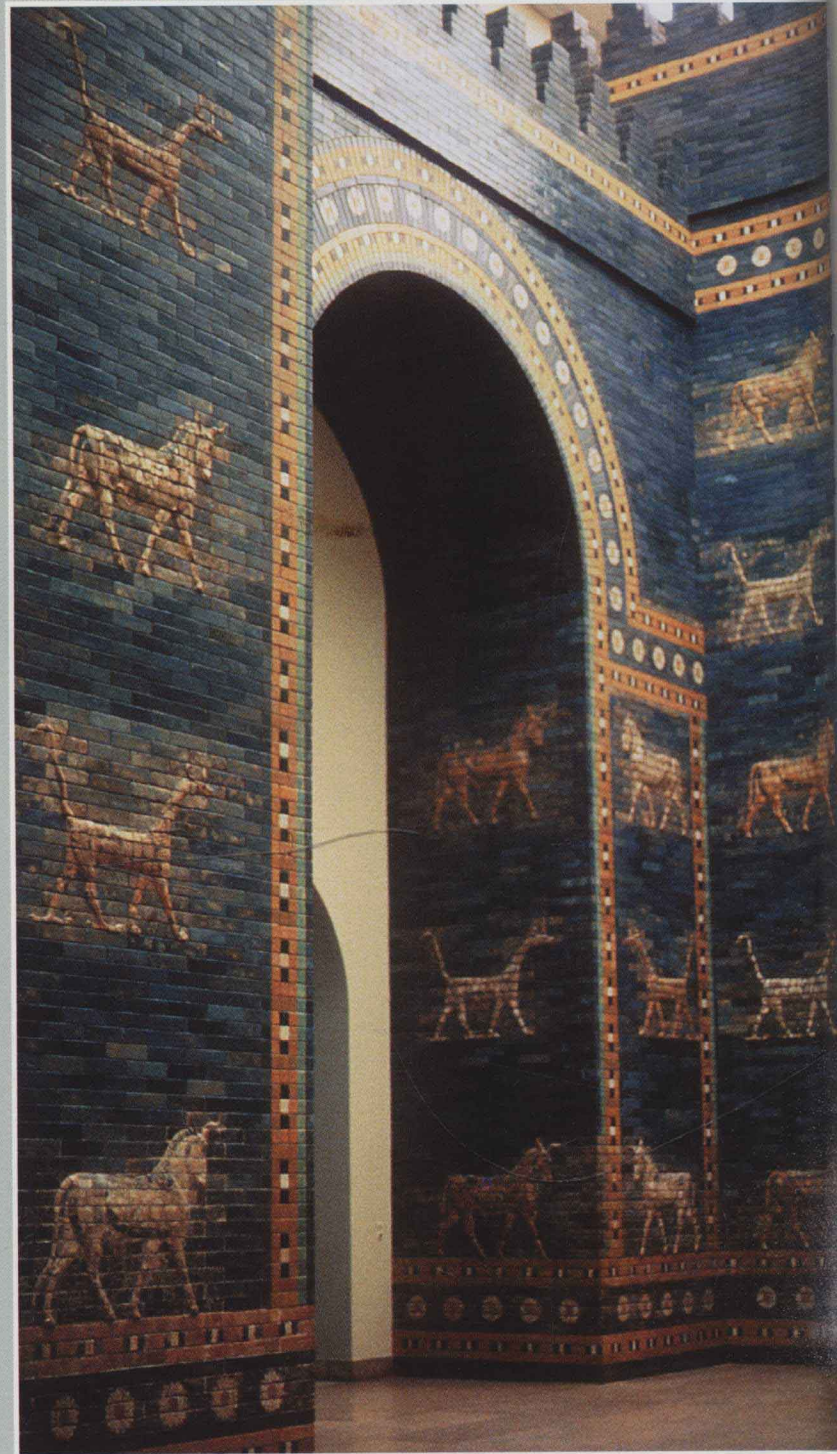
Animal guardians

From the time of the earliest civilizations, artists have carved images of fierce animals. People believed that these frightening creatures could act as guardians, and protect them. These animal guardians were placed in important positions, such as doorways. They were meant to make their people feel safe and to frighten away any enemies. Some of the guardians were modelled on real animals, such as lions or bulls. Others combined the features of several different animals.

Ancient guards

Around the year 575 BCE, the people of the ancient city of Babylon built a massive gate leading to their city. They covered this gate with a series of giant figures of bulls and dragons. These magnificent creatures are made from thousands of tiny pieces of **mosaic**. They are coloured gold and brown and stand out proudly against their turquoise background. The bulls look strong and powerful, while the dragons seem magical and mysterious. Together, they send out the message that any enemies would be best to keep away from the city.

The splendid palace of Nimrud, in Ancient Assyria, was built around 850 BCE. At the heart of the palace was the royal throne room, protected by a pair of massive stone creatures. These creatures had the powerful combination of the head of a man, the wings of an eagle, and the body of a lion.



The restored entrance gate to the city of Babylon. For visitors, these larger-than-life guardian animals would have been a magnificent sight.

Egyptian animal gods

The Ancient Egyptians worshipped many gods and goddesses, and several of these gods had the heads of animals or birds. Horus, the god of the sky, is shown in paintings and carvings with a falcon's head. Anubis, the god of death, has the head of a jackal, and Amun, the creator, has a ram's head. The goddess Taweret took the form of a hippo. She looked after pregnant women and babies.

The goddess Bastet was the protector of cats. She is sometimes shown as a woman with a cat's head, and sometimes represented simply as a cat. One surviving **sculpture** shows the goddess as a slim and elegant, pointed-faced cat.

Egyptian cats

The Egyptians had a great respect for cats because the cats protected their precious grain from mice. Many people kept cats as pets, and anyone who killed a cat could be put to death. When a family cat died, the family mourned for it, shaving off their eyebrows to show their sadness. When the cat of a pharaoh died, its body was preserved as a **mummy**.



An Ancient Egyptian carving of the god Anubis, with a jackal's head. Jackals feed on the bodies of dead animals, and Anubis was the god of the dead.

Jaguars of the Maya

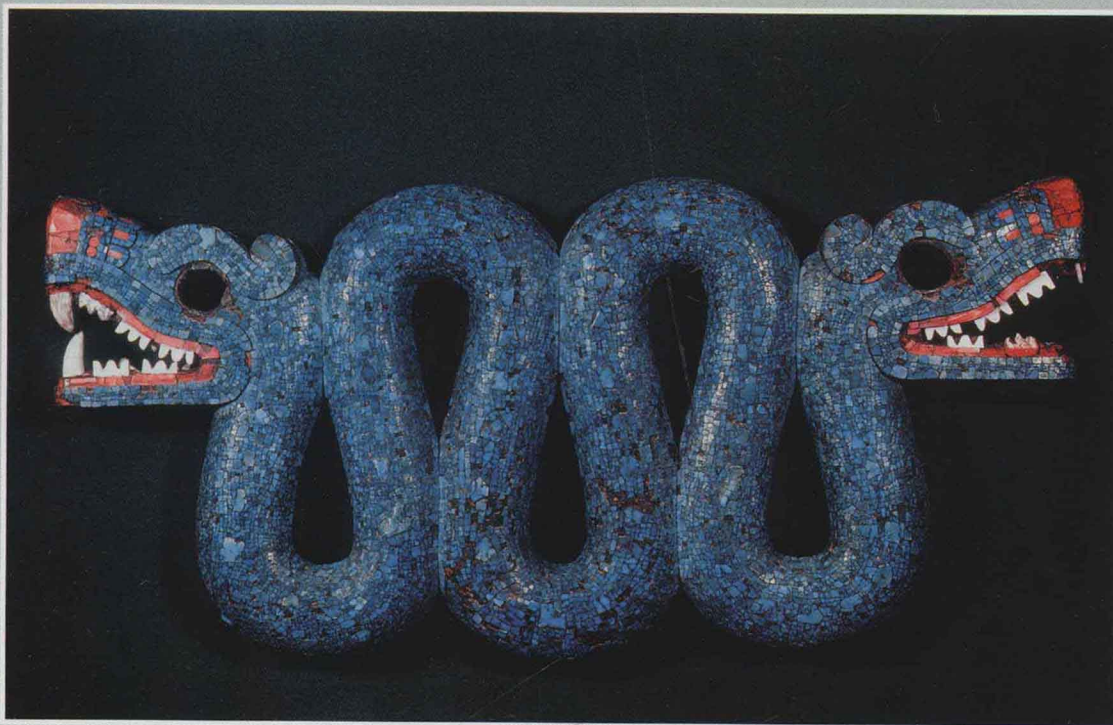
The warlike Maya people lived in Central America between 300 BCE and 1500 CE. They built stone cities deep in the rainforests and carved massive stone heads to protect their cities. The heads had wide-open jaws filled with vicious-looking, pointed teeth. These fearsome guardians were clearly based on the jaguars that prowled the surrounding forests.

Aztec creatures

The Aztec people settled in central Mexico around the year 1300 CE. They were skilled craft workers, who created ornaments from **semi-precious stones** such as turquoise. One surviving ornament shows a serpent with a wavy, snake-like body, and two savage biting heads. The Aztec people believed that snakes had special powers.

They worshipped several serpent (snake) gods, including Quetzalcoatl (the feathered serpent), Xiuhcoatl (the fire serpent), and Mixcoatl (the cloud serpent).

The Aztecs made colourful folded books, known as **codices**. These contain many images of animals, including birds, snakes, and jaguars. The codices also show Aztec **knights** dressed in animal costumes. Eagle knights wore a suit of feathers, with eagle's talons covering their feet, a long feathery tail, and a helmet made from an eagle's head and beak. Jaguar knights dressed in a jaguar's skin, with their head emerging from the jaguar's jaws. Aztec warriors believed that when they dressed as eagles or jaguars, they took on some of the qualities of those animals, becoming swift and fearless.



An Aztec serpent brooch, made from turquoise and other semi-precious stones. The Aztecs believed that serpents had special powers. So, a brooch like this could protect its wearer from harm.



The Nazca people were famous for their animal whistling jars. This jar is decorated with a painting of a condor (a kind of vulture). The image of the condor looks remarkably modern, even though it was painted almost a thousand years ago.

Animal warriors

The Aztecs were not the only warriors to wear animal costumes. On the central plains of North America, Native American chiefs dressed in buffalo skins and wore headdresses made from eagles' feathers. As well as wearing costumes that linked them to animals, Native Americans often gave themselves animal names. So, a chief might be named Sitting Bull or Running Deer. Names like these showed the Native American people's respect for the animals all around them.

Nazca jars

The Nazca people lived in South America from around 200 BCE to 600 CE. They produced pottery jars in the shape of creatures, such as fish, ducks, and turtles. Some of the jars had spouts and mouthpieces and could be blown as whistles. **Archaeologists** think that these whistling jars were used in religious ceremonies in which the Nazca people made contact with powerful animal spirits. Priests may have blown into the whistling jars to give the animal spirits a voice.

Animals of India

In the 6th century CE, people in India began to carve massive temples from rock. These mountain-shaped temples were covered with carvings of **Hindu** gods and goddesses. Many of these carved gods take the form of different creatures, and some of the gods ride on animals, such as a bull or a rat. These religious creatures have many meanings, but the Hindu artists clearly observed the animals and birds of India when they were carving and painting them.

Ganesha and Hanuman

One of the best-known Hindu gods is Ganesha, the god of wisdom and learning. He is shown with an elephant head, four arms, and two legs. Carvings of Ganesha often show the god with a round belly and a jolly, smiling face. Sometimes Ganesha is even shown dancing, with his trunk and his arms waving in the air. Although Ganesha does not strictly resemble an elephant, it is clear that the Indian **sculptors** were familiar with real elephants and their playful behaviour.

Another common figure in Hindu art is Hanuman, the monkey god. Statues of Hanuman are often placed as guardian figures outside a temple. Hanuman is frequently shown as a lively, mischievous god.

The incarnations of Vishnu

Hindus teach that their god Vishnu has had nine different lives, or **incarnations**. In several of these incarnations he took the form of an animal. Vishnu is shown in carvings and paintings as a fish, a turtle, and a boar — all animals that are found in the Indian countryside.

Rats and bulls

Several Hindu gods are shown riding on an animal's back. For example, the god Shiva rides a bull, called Nandi, while Ganesha is sometimes carried by a very strong rat. Most carved scenes featuring Ganesha also include his helpful rat, hidden somewhere in the picture.

Nandi, the bull who carries Shiva, is a very important figure for Hindus. All over India, sculptors have created statues of Nandi. The bull is a **sacred** animal in the Hindu religion. Hindus are not allowed to harm bulls or cows, or to eat their meat.