

## ***Death Ship Images in Painted Cave of Niah, Sarawak***

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### **ABSTRACT**

This article on the findings of research obtained from Painted Cave which is believed to be a Neolithic settlement. The main focus of this research is to identify prehistoric images that have been generated about 3,000 years ago. Among the images that have been identified are images of humans, animals, abstract forms and most interesting are the images of the death ship that became the main icon in the entire wall of the cave painting. The Sarawak Museum has a limited record of prehistoric images found in the Painted Cave. The objective of this research is to record prehistoric images and produce illustrative images as a more detailed record of these prehistoric images, especially death ship images. The survey method was used in collecting primary data from the field. Secondary data were obtained from the museum as the closest reference material to this research. Interviews were also used in obtaining information from experts among museum officers. Observation and photography methods are used to record images digitally. The main purpose of this image is to create a more proper organized and detailed documentation. This research found that the prehistoric image of a death ship is symbolic of the transition of the spirits of the dead to the realm of death. This research proves that prehistoric societies have adapted and this belief is the practice of the early beliefs of the Neolithic society at that time. This effort is the first step towards conservation. Hence, this finding can be an early effort for conservation work in the future.

**Keywords:** Painted cave, cave painting, death ship, prehistoric images