

PRES
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June
17-18
2021

15:00 to
19:00
(London time)

INTERNATIONAL
SYMPOSIUM
VOICES FROM
THE BEGINNING:
A GLOBAL VIEW
OF EARLY
HUMAN
ART

Rock art provides a glimpse into the earliest artistic expressions of humans across the globe. Art gives voice to culture, a voice that can persist through time. Across the globe the genesis of artistic expression is recorded in rock art, providing a doorway into how the earliest humans sought to navigate and understand their place in the world. These images record the voices that shaped and influenced burgeoning cosmologies, social norms, and relationships with nature, laying the cultural foundation for generations to come.

In the Serranía La Lindosa, in the Colombian Amazon, vibrant paintings cover rock shelters walls. The visually impressive painted panels depict human figures, hunting scenes, dances and ceremonies, handprints, plants, abstract geometric designs and multiple animals, including what appear to be extinct Ice Age animals. Archaeological research conducted by the ERC Last Journey project has confirmed the origins of the paintings to 12,600 years before the present (BP) and reach back to the time of contact. The paintings are therefore some of the earliest artistic expressions of native Amazonians and hold great potential for understanding early human interaction with the landscape and the development of the unique Amazonian cultures and worldviews. The spectacular rock art has captured the public imagination.

The ERC Last Journey project within partnership with the Colombian Institute of Anthropology and History (ICANH), Universidad de Antioquia and Universidad Nacional de Colombia is hosting an online international symposium on June 2021 17-18, bringing together experts from worldwide with modern Amazonian artists to compare the global evolution and development of humanity through artistic expression, with a targeted publication of a highly visual edited volume, titled, "Voices from the beginning: A global view of early human art".



MATCHDAY 1
JUNE 17
2021

EARLY ROCK
ART IN THE
GLOBAL CONTEXT

OPENING

15:00 TO 15:10

OPENING OF THE EVENT

Nicolás Loaiza Díaz
(Director of the ICANH)

15:10 TO 5:30

INTRODUCTION TO
EARLY HUMAN ART
AND THE ERC LAST
JOURNEY PROJECT

José Iriarte
(Exeter University)



CONFERENCES

15:30 TO 15:55

VISIONS FROM THE BEGINNING:
EVIDENCE FOR AUSTRALIA'S
EARLIEST ART PRODUCTION

Jo McDonald
(University of Western Australia, Australia)

RE
SU
ME

Rock art represents some of the best evidence for humanity's artistic deep history. Rock art has been made across the world for at least 40,000 years. It includes a plethora of paintings, drawings, stencils, prints and engravings made by all peoples directly onto the earth's harder surfaces. Australia has one of the world's greatest rock art estates: A vast cultural resource essential to understanding why humans make art. This is an essential record of the First Australians and their journey into Australia. And it is a record of Aboriginal people's cultural connections, and their resilience, persistence and ingenuity through the millennia.

Researchers working with Aboriginal people in Australia's northwest are forging new understandings of this amazing national treasure. And new management regimes in Indigenous Protected Areas and co-managed National Parks are providing the platforms for sustainable new economies for Aboriginal people working with rock art on-country. This talk focuses on some of the partnerships between Aboriginal communities and researchers at the Centre for Rock Art Research + Management, UWA, and highlights some of the magnificent rock art of Australia's northwest which is enabling these new understandings and economic opportunities.

15:55 TO 16:20

ROCK ART IN SIBERIA:
PREHISTORIC AND
MODERN ARTISTS

Andrzej Rozwadowski
(Faculty of Archaeology,
Adam Mickiewicz University
in Poznań, Poland)

Elena A. Miklashevich
(Institute of Archaeology Russian,
Academy of Sciences, Moscow;
Tomskaya Pisanitsa Museum, Russia)



RE
SU
ME

Siberia is home to a huge number of rock art images. In our presentation, we first review the chronological and geographical diversity of Siberian rock art. We pay special attention to the question of the origins of this tradition, which is still not clear, but the continuously discovering new images allow us to suggest that the oldest petroglyphs could have been created as early as in the Pleistocene, in the Upper Palaeolithic. Subsequent prehistoric periods are characterised by an even greater diversity of rock art. It concerns both the Bronze Age (III-II millennium BC) and the Iron Age (I millennium BC), when the early nomadic culture flourished on the steppes of Eurasia. The art of those Early Nomads is characterised by many distinctive features. Images on rocks were also created in later periods, and in some places even in strictly historical times; among the latter are, for example, unique images of shamans. The practice of making images on rocks has not survived to our times. The unique feature of Siberian rock art is however that in modern times it has become an inspiration for a large number of contemporary artists; on the basis of their fascination with prehistoric art a distinct artistic movement has even developed, known as Siberian Neorchaic. Some artists draw on these ancient art forms searching for aesthetic and conceptual inspirations, others see in ancient art symbols the signs of their cultural identity. In our presentation, therefore, we offer a brief but complex overview of the "tradition" of Siberian rock art, from its origins to its contemporary revitalisation.

16:20 TO 16:30

INTERVAL

16:30 TO 16:55

SOUTH AFRICAN HUNTER-GATHERER
ROCK ART: A RECORD OF
HUNTER-GATHERER WORLD VIEW

David Pearce
(Rock Art Research Institute,
University of the Witwatersrand,
Johannesburg, South Africa)

RE
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ME

The hunter-gatherer rock art of South Africa's Drakensberg mountains is both beautiful and detailed. The detail of the art combined with insights from ethnographic sources has allowed considerable understanding of the symbolism of the art. Recent work on paint composition has led to a series of radiocarbon dates for the art in the region that helps place it within its historical context and suggests further insights into its production. This presentation gives an overview of the Drakensberg rock art, its interpretation and its meaning.

16:55 TO 17:20

ALTAMIRA AND THE EUROPEAN PALEOLITHIC ART:
THE FIRST ART OF THE HUMANITY

Pilar Fatás Monforte
(Director of the National Museum
and Research Center of Altamira, Spain)

RE
SU
ME

Rock art is a universal phenomenon that appears with the emergence of *Homo Sapiens* in the five continents, as a reflection of our intellectual capacity to represent the surrounding reality, our symbolic thought and abstraction ability. And in the European peninsula, it appears from the Urals to the Iberian Peninsula. Among all the rock art sites that we know nowadays, Altamira highlights as one of the most spectacular examples all over the world; it has become a symbol of prehistoric cave art because of the magnificence of its art. The circumstances of its discovery also contributed to this mythologizing of Altamira. In this presentation, I provide a summary of the rock art of Altamira cave.

17:20 TO 17:45

Elena Valera
Contemporary Amazonian Artist

17:45 TO 18:15

Jamie Hampson
(University of Exeter, UK)
Discussant

18:15 TO 19:00

Questions and answers session



MATCHDAY 2
JUNE 18
2021

ROCK ART AND THE SETTLEMENT OF THE AMERICAS

15:00 TO 15:20

ICE AGE MEGAFaUNA ROCK ART IN THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON?

ERC Last Journey Project Team

**RE
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ME**

Rock art has played a significant role in Pleistocene archaeology. Depictions of megafauna have accompanied the earliest archaeological contexts across all of the continents, revealing a fundamental interrelationship between early humans and megafauna during the global human expansion as unfamiliar landscapes were humanised and identities built into new territories. However, the identification of extinct megafauna from rock art has been a contentious issue. In this paper, we examine potential megafauna depictions in the rock art of Serranía de La Lindosa, Colombia that includes giant sloth, a gomphothere, a camelid, horses, and three-toed ungulates with trunks. We conclude that there are sound grounds to consider them Ice Age rock art based on i) the naturalistic appearance and diagnostic morphological features of the animal images, ii) the late Pleistocene archaeological dates from La Lindosa confirming the contemporaneity of humans and megafauna, iii) the recovery of ochre pigments in late Pleistocene archaeological strata, iv) the presence of megafauna identified in the region during the late Pleistocene as attested by palaeontological records, and v) the widespread depiction of extinct megafauna in rock art across the Americas. Our findings contribute to the emerging picture of considerable geographical and stylistic variation of geometric and figurative rock art from early human occupations across South America. Lastly, we discuss the implications of our findings for understanding the early human history of South America.

15:20 TO 15:40

THE VISION OF THE INVADED: EUROPEAN PRESENCE IN AMAZONIAN PICTOGRAPHS

Fernando Urbina
(Universidad Nacional de Colombia)

**RE
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ME**

Based on fieldwork carried out in 2011 in the Serranía de La Lindosa (Colombian Amazon), pictorial representations of entities foreign to the Amazonian environment were detected, whose probable simultaneity could be attributed to the entry of European agents into the region from the middle of the third decade of the 16th century. Since 2013, we had access to the reports and correspondence of Philipp von Hutten, a member of the Imperial troop commanded by George Hohemuth von Speyer (1535-1538). These texts detail, in particular, the use of war dogs as a weapon and an element of torture and terror. A sword, four cattle, four equids, forty war dogs and several scenes of harassment by dogs are depicted in the pictographs of La Lindosa.

15:40 TO 16:00

PALEO ROCK ART IN AMAZONIA AND ORINOQUIA [COLOMBIA], AS SEEN FROM CHIRIBIQUETE: RECONSTRUCTION OF BIODIVERSITY THROUGH ROCK ART AND EXTINCT AND PRESENT-DAY ARCHAEOFAUNA

Carlos Castaño-Urbe
(Fundación Herencia Ambiental, Colombia)

Carlos Lasso Alcalá
(Investigación de Recursos Biológicos Alexander von Humboldt, Colombia)

**RE
SU
ME**

The Serranía de Chiribiquete (SCH), Serranía de La Lindosa (SLL) and Sierra de La Macarena (SLM), located in the Amazon and Orinoco basin (Guiana Shield, Colombia), present a series of cultural manifestations associated with rock art with a chronological and stratigraphic framework related to the end of the Pleistocene, the beginning of the Holocene and continued use of the ritual use of paleoart until the present day. A unique condition that makes these sites unique in the world. Overall, the pictographs present in these three formations show great biodiversity, both extinct and present, where SCH stands out for a very diverse rock art representation. In total, five classes of vertebrates alone are recognised: mammals (12 orders, 20 families and more than 35 morphotypes/morphospecies); birds (6, 6 and more than 7 m/m); reptiles (4, 5 species and more than 8 m/m); amphibians (1, 1 and several m/m) and finally fish, the most diverse group (5, 9 and at least 65 m/m). Of this diversity of vertebrates, at least 8 orders and 8 families have faunal elements (megafauna) that are now extinct: Theriiformes (Glyptodontidae: 1 genus); Pilosa (Megatheriidae: 1); Carnivora (Felidae: 1); Perissodactyla (Equidae: 2); Artiodactyla (Camelidae: 1); Rodentia (Hydrochoeridae: 1); Notungulata (Toxodontidae: 1) and Proboscidea (Gomphoteriidae: 1). The pictographs show the extinction of species at the end of the Pleistocene and the beginning of the Holocene and the coexistence of humans with these species in both periods; the coexistence of current and extinct species; a high diversity of current species in the three hill chains and the reduction of the current geographical distribution area of some of them. The amazing pictorial, archaeological and cultural manifestations of Chiribiquete show a very homogeneous set of icons and archetypes that define a cultural tradition, possibly dating back more than 20,000 years before present, and the site has been reused for ceremonial purposes up to the present day.

16:00 TO 16:20

ROCK ART OF MONTE ALEGRE, PARÁ, BRAZIL: CHARACTERISTICS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Edith Pereira
(Museo Paranaense Emilio Goeldi, Brazil)

Claide Moraes
(Universidade Federal do Oeste do Pará, Brazil)

**RE
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ME**

Monte Alegre, a municipality located in the lower Amazon region, has been known since the 19th century for the cave paintings in the region's hills. In 1996, Anna Roosevelt and collaborators published the results of the excavation carried out at the Caverna da Pedra Pintada site and revealed very ancient dates for the human occupation of this cave –11,200 years B. P.– which were indirectly associated with the cave paintings. In 2014, a new excavation was carried out at this site by researchers from the Emilio Goeldi Museum and the Federal University of Western Pará, revealing new data for the understanding of the occupation process of the site, characteristics of the archaeological material and chronology of the site. The detailed control of the sequence of deposition of various archaeological remains such as hearths, pieces with traces of pigments, dye sticks and some marks on the painted walls have been used in an initial attempt to propose moments of graphic activities. The recording and classification of regional rock art accumulated over more than two decades, together with these new data and some stylistic analyses of rock motifs and decorative motifs on ceramics from the region, have allowed a new proposal for contextualisation, with the possibility of understanding different moments of these graphic manifestations.

16:20 TO 16:30

INTERVAL

16:30 TO 16:50

A TRADITION OF TERMINAL PLEISTOCENE ASTRONOMICAL PICTOGRAPHS AT MONTE ALEGRE

Christopher Sean Davis
(University of Illinois at Chicago, US)

**RE
SU
ME**

The archaeological sites near Monte Alegre, along Brazil's lower Amazon River, provide new information on the little-known activities and symbolism of South American Paleoindians toward the end of the Ice Age. Early settlers of Monte Alegre painted rock art on the landscape, which bears a record of the sun's horizon positions throughout the year. At just 2° south of the equator, Monte Alegre shows no overt seasonal changes beyond fluctuating rainfall amounts, unlike at higher latitudes where temperature, amount of daylight, foliage, and forms of precipitation markedly change. Near the equator, solar and stellar horizon sightings most visibly track the passage of time and seasonal cycles. However, horizons are often hidden behind high forest canopy throughout much of the Amazon rainforest; but in the Monte Alegre hill ridges looming above the river, Paleoindians could hike above the canopy to peer at the horizon, more effectively synchronizing their activities to ecological cycles. This research suggests that Monte Alegre Paleoindians delimited the azimuthal range of the sun in a solar year with notational pictographs aligned to horizon sightings at Panel do Pilão, and leaving a painted grid of tally marks that might have served as a rudimentary early calendar. The broad-reaching implication for early Americans is that through the strategic placement of rock art, these ancient artists fostered predictive archaeo-recording from which resources could be optimally extracted, ceremonial activities could be consistently scheduled, and gatherings for social and economic exchange could be more efficiently coordinated.

16:50 TO 17:10

ROCK ART FROM THE STATE OF MINAS GERAIS [CENTRAL BRAZIL]

André Prous y Alenice Baeta
(Departamento de Antropologia e Arqueologia da Faculdade de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas da Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais)

**RE
SU
ME**

Hundreds of rock art sites are known in the state of Minas Gerais. The research carried out by local researchers was mainly aimed at defining a chrono-style based on excavations and the observation of the supports. It was thus possible to show the transformations in the themes and forms of representation in the various regions over the millennia. Some styles are regional or local, while some thematic traditions extend over hundreds of kilometres, presenting distinct regional facets. The panels show the relationships that the various generations of painters and engravers had with previous graphemes (respect, integration, destruction or overlay) and their preferences for distinct rock supports. Surviving indigenous groups maintain deep relationships with the rock paintings near their territories, particularly in the Rio Doce valley.

17:10 TO 17:30

VOICES FROM THE SOUTHERN CONE... ECHOES FROM THE ROCK ART OF PATAGONIA AND THE ARGENTINEAN NORTHWEST

Laura Miotti
(División Arqueología, Museo de La Plata, Facultad de Ciencias Naturales y Museo-Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Conicet, Argentina)

Natalia Carden
(Investigaciones Arqueológicas y Paleontológicas del Cuaternario Pampeano-Incuapa. Unidad Ejecutora Conicet y Unicen, Universidad Nacional del Centro, Argentina)

**RE
SU
ME**

In this presentation we link the early rock art of Argentina with the settlement patterns proposed for this South American region. Within this framework, we identify practices in terms of the social actors involved in their production and use, the selection of sites for painting and engraving, and human attitudes towards previous images. This narrative through the images comprises an extensive sequence of human occupation that begins with the exploratory and initial colonization stages in unknown environments of the southern cone, i.e. a time span between 13,000 and 9000 years before the present. During this period the environments were very different from the present ones and were characterized by faunas and floras that later became extinct or disappeared in these different regions. Also in the mountainous areas, glaciers were more extensive than today and the availability of water, particularly in the semi-desert environments, was much greater. These new environments and their resources generated a singular dialectic between artists and places. This is materialized in part with the images, both engraved and painted in caves and rock shelters. For this purpose, early rock art contexts systematically documented by different teams as part of long-standing regional archaeological investigations in Argentina are presented. These are located in the Puna de Jujuy (northwestern Argentina), the Deseado Massif and the Pinturas River (both in Santa Cruz, Southern Patagonia). Both regions are almost 3000 km away from each other, so from the evaluation of these distant sectors we propose that the production of rock art begins in the Pleistocene/Holocene transition with a very weak archaeological signal. During the early Holocene, areas with different styles began to be visualized, possibly linked to a deep knowledge of the humanized landscape and converted into territory. We particularly discuss the role of geometric art, hunting scenes and hand stencils in the interactions between dispersed hunter-gatherer groups. Although transformations over time are recorded, there is a strong emphasis on the maintenance of tradition through the replication, repainting and recycling of images. This fact points to a permanent dialogue with the above in order to preserve, rework and update the social memory of the landscapes.

17:30 TO 17:50

TERRITORY OF MEMORY: THE DRAWINGS ON THE STONES AND THE HISTORY OF THE AMAZON HILEA

Denilson Baniwa
(Contemporary Amazonian Artist, Brazil)

17:50 TO 18:10

Eduardo Goes Neves
(Universidade de São Paulo, Brasil)

Discussant

18:10 TO 19:00

Questions and answers session

EVENT INFORMATION

Live broadcast to:

Spanish
9:00 a. m. Bogota time

YouTube ICAANH

Portuguese
11:00 a. m. Brasilia time

YouTube Audiovisuais del ICAANH

English
3:00 p. m. London time

Zoom (limited places)