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Session title: Prehistoric technology: Cognition and the act of artifact production

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Session Abstract

Archaeological theory and practice are often in strong competition. Terms such as 'culture' and 'technology' still stimulate scientific debates and curiosity. Indeed, archaeologists list many different cultures within their own specific research areas.

The archaeological evidence of culture can be recorded as a 'technological package or set' and consequently technology is indivisible from the culture in which it is embedded. Materialities embed, embody or transmit systems of intangible ideas and behavioural patterns. What could have stimulated prehistoric people in such ways? And can we speak about technological 'packages-worlds' as most of embody cosmological views sharing 'individual' and 'distributed' knowledge?

Knowledge is first of all an experience guided by perception. There is a link between knowledge and perception, witnessed through representation. How materiality is presented to humans is still one of the most utilised traits in contemporary philosophical thought. Perception and knowledge production is the result of social ordering within a chaotic world.

The 'chaîne opératoire' model assists the scholar in understanding technical systems and physical aspects of tools and raw material with the knowledge base, skills, values, symbolic representations and social frameworks responsible with the mundane of human life.

This session invites scholars whose research agenda includes the study of prehistoric material cultures that show clear evidence of socio-political rather than economic agency.

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