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Dr Yann-Pierre Montelle completed his PhD at Brown University in Anthropology and Performance studies. A rock art researcher and speleoarchaeologist specializing in the human use of caves in prehistory, he has conducted international fieldwork and research in Australia, France and New Zealand, and published on a variety of topics related to rock art. He has lectured in Human Evolution, the Archaeology of Pleistocene Rock Art, and Shamanism at Canterbury University, New Zealand. More recently, he has shifted his investigative interests towards India's fascinating prehistory.



Date: January 22-24, 2018

Time: 4:30 PM | Venue: AB1/001

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**Human Evolution: of mosaic, hybrids, and braids**

Recent major discoveries known as Masol, Naledi, Jebel Irhoud, Peștera cu Oase, and Denisovan are challenging established theories and narratives about the fascinating process of hominization. As a result, the linear and often simplistic model is being progressively replaced by a more complex braided stream-like model. For this lecture, I will focus on recent discoveries and discuss their impact on currently held theories on human evolution.

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**Homo faber: ubiquitous needs and cognition**

Karl Marx once wrote that “man is a creature of needs”. Keeping this fundamental aspects of all hominids, I will discuss what I refer to as the basic biomechanical architectonics – the coping mechanisms and cost effective responses to these increasing needs – a signature of modernity and cognitive growth. I will briefly establish an index of some of these fundamental gestures and their resulting by-products and contextualise these in terms of cognition.

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**Homo aestheticus: But is it Art?**

On Sunday 18 December 1994, the so-called Chauvet cave was discovered. Its iconography was so unexpected that it managed to single handedly render a century of theoretical deliberation and deeply rooted a priori obsolete. It is, to date, the most vigorous challenge to linearity. For this lecture I will briefly survey the established theoretical frameworks and how these were so critically impacted by Chauvet. I will provide an opportunity to explore the cave and discuss what could have been the motivations for these paleospeleologists. But more importantly, I will discuss the problematic question: But is it art?

Co-organized by

Centre for Cognitive Science, IIT Gandhinagar  
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