

SESSION TITLE: Archaeological approaches to dance performance

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SESSION PROPOSAL:

Dance has existed for as long as man has existed - dance was arguably already practiced in the Palaeolithic, the earliest known examples coming from Palaeolithic European art such as the Addaura Cave on Sicily. The importance of dance to historical and pre-historical societies can be seen in its widespread iconographic visibility, both temporally and spatially. Beyond the aesthetic value of dance, it is also an important medium through which cultural principles are forged and communicated, via the visual, kinaesthetic, and aesthetic aspects of human movement. Dance can be a more effective medium than verbal language in revealing needs and desire and masking true intentions. These movements are structured systems of knowledge, and form visual manifestations of social relations, which in turn may assist in understanding the cultural values and structure of the society.

Through the study of dance, it is possible to see and understand how identities are marked, shaped and introduced. Styles of dance constitute social relations - changes in this transmission can help us ascertain the underlying ideologies which are attached to bodily movement and discourse.

In this session we invite papers which explore archaeological manifestations of dance from any period or geographical area.

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