VISUALISING THE NEOLITHIC

Visualising the Neolithic: Abstraction, Figuration, Performance, Representation

Neolithic Studies Group Seminar Papers 13

Edited by

Andrew Cochrane and Andrew Meirion Jones

This book is dedicated to the artist and photographer Ken Williams
whose work is actively forwarding archaeological research
and whose photographs embellish the cover of this book.

To view more of Ken's wonderful photography go to:
www.shadowsandstone.com

Contents

List of Contributors

LARA BACELAR ALVES
larabacelar@sapo.pt

RICHARD BRADLEY
Department of Archaeology
University of Reading
Whiteknights
Reading, RG6 6AH
r.j.bradley@reading.ac.uk

NICK CARD
Orkney Research Centre for Archaeology
Orkney College (UHI)
Kirkwall, KW15 1LX
nick.card@uhi.ac.uk

JOHN CHAPMAN
Durham University
Department of Archaeology
Durham, DH1 3LE
j.c.chapman@dur.ac.uk

ANDREW COCHRANE
Sainsbury Institute for the Study of
    Japanese Arts and Cultures
64 The Close
Norwich, NR1 4DW
cochraneaj@gmail.com

TREVOR COWIE
Department of Archaeology
National Museums Scotland
Chambers Street
Edinburgh, EH1 1JF
t.cowie@nms.ac.uk

BISSERKA GAYDARSKA
Durham University
Department of Archaeology
Durham, DH1 3LE
b_gaydarska@yahoo.co.uk

ROBERT HENSEY
Contact via: Dept. of Archaeology
School of Geography and Archaeology
NUI Galway, Co. Galway
http://independent.academia.edu/
RobertHensey

DANIELA HOFMANN
Cardiff University Centre for Lifelong
    Learning
Senghennydd Road
Cardiff, CF24 4AG
HofmannD@cf.ac.uk

LILIANA JANIK
Department of Archaeology
University of Cambridge
Downing Street
Cambridge, CB2 3DZ
lj102@cam.ac.uk

ANDREW MERION JONES
Archaeology
Faculty of Humanities
University of Southampton
Highfield
Southampton, SO17 1BF
amj@soton.ac.uk

ANTTI LAHELMA
Department of Archaeology
University of Helsinki
Unioninkatu 38F
P.O Box 59
00014 Helsingin yliopisto
Finland
antti.lahelma@helsinki.fi

GUILLAUME ROBIN
Università degli Studi di Sassari
Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia
Piazza Conte di Moriana, 8
07100 Sassari
Italy
guillaume.robin@netcourrier.com

DAVID ROBINSON
School of Forensic & Investigative Sciences
University of Central Lancashire
Preston, PR1 2HE
DWRobinson@uclan.ac.uk

STRATOS NANOGLOU
Stratos.Nanoglou@gmail.com

STUART NEEDHAM
Langton Fold
South Harting,
West Sussex, GU31 5NW
sbowman1@waitrose.com

KATE E. SHARPE
Department of Archaeology
Durham University
South Road
Durham, DH1 3LE
kesharpe@live.co.uk

ANTONIA THOMAS
Archaeology Department
University of the Highlands and Islands
Orkney College
East Road
Kirkwall, KW15 1LX
antonia.thomas@orkney.uhi.ac.uk

ELIZABETH TWOHIG
Annestown
Co. Waterford
Ireland
etwohig@archaeology.ucc.ie

GILLIAN VARNDELL
Deptartment of Prehistory and Europe
British Museum
Gt. Russell St.
London, WC1B 3DG
GVarndell@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk

AARON WATSON
www.monumental.uk.com
a.watson@monumental.uk.com

Visualising the Neolithic: an introduction

Andrew Cochrane and Andrew Meirion Jones

> *Art does not reproduce the visible; rather, it makes visible*
> Paul Klee

INTRODUCTION

We begin with a quote from the artist Paul Klee's 1919 *Creative Credo* (see Wrathall 2011); it captures many of the interpretative issues we raise in our discussion of Neolithic visuality below. Before commencing with a discussion of how we analyse Neolithic visual expressions we commence with a brief overview of the material from Neolithic Europe.

This volume discusses visual expression across Neolithic Europe; as such it considers a range of media, including rock art, passage tomb art, mortuary costume and figurines. One of the primary aims of the volume is to compare approaches to differing visual media; the volume therefore brings together debates within two archaeological 'special interest' groups: rock art specialists and figurine specialists. We do this for two reasons. First, to reconsider and compare approaches to the study of visuality across these classes of visual media. Secondly, these discussions are introduced, as we believe they have a significant bearing on our wider appreciation of the Neolithic, and should not solely be confined to specialist forums.

The papers in this volume result from a meeting of the Neolithic Studies Group on the topic of '*Neolithic visual culture*' at the British Museum in November 2010. The intention of the meeting was to assess new studies of rock art from across Britain and Ireland, and to compare these with studies of Neolithic visuality from continental Europe. For the published volume the scope of the original meeting was widened, and the editors elicited papers from outside the conference to provide a wider context, and more coherent analysis, of visual expression across Neolithic Europe. The volume is organised so that the rock art and passage tomb art traditions of the Neolithic in Britain and Ireland are compared to the rock art traditions of Northern and Southern Europe, and the mortuary costumes and figurines of Central and South-eastern Europe. Prehistoric art and imagery is a notoriously difficult subject to define, and the reader will notice that we are careful to avoid, where possible, the terms 'art' and 'visual culture' in our discussion of Neolithic visual media. The reasons for this will become clear below.

Starting with a brief overview of approaches to Neolithic visual forms, including rock art and figurines, we then discuss broader theoretical problems associated with the study

of visuality, particularly the issue of representation. We consider how our understanding of Neolithic material forms relates to our broad understanding of the chronology of the period in Europe, and conclude by reconsidering previous discussions of the role of symbolic representation in the process of Neolithisation.

ROCK ART AND FIGURINES: FROM REPRESENTATION TO PERFORMANCE

Representational motifs are common in the rock art traditions of Northern Scandinavia, Neolithic Brittany and Neolithic and Copper Age Alpine France and Italy, and for the Schematic and Levantine art of the Iberian Peninsula. Scholars studying these rock art traditions have focused on the representational significance of form (Bradley 2009; Barfield and Chippindale 1997; Nordbladh 1978; Tilley 1991; Tilley 2006; Tilley and Thomas 1993; Whittle 2000; Diaz-Andreu 1998; Domingo Sanz 2009). The representational nature of these motifs appears to be borne out by images that appear to represent animals, humans and artefacts. This representational approach, however, often provides a narrow account of images. It tends to privilege form over process, overlooks the material properties of images, and as a result can present images as static and unchanging entities. Recent accounts of Scandinavian rock art, while retaining a sense of the image as representation, also acknowledge the material and sensory qualities of images (Hultmann 2010; Goldhahn 2002; 2010; Lahelma 2008; 2010), while some narratives incorporate accounts of representational meaning alongside a subtle analysis of seasonal change (e.g., Helskog 1999; Gjerde 2010); as a result the motifs in these accounts are less static, and acknowledge the changing character of images.

The rock art and passage tomb art traditions of Britain and Ireland, like much rock art on the Atlantic fringe of Europe, contrast with other regions of continental Europe as they are dominated by abstract geometric motifs including cup and rings, spirals and rosettes (Bradley 1997). These visually spectacular motifs – particularly those of the well-documented passage tombs in Ireland– have invited a variety of interpretations over the years, by both scholars and the general public. It is precisely because of the visually spectacular nature of these motifs that interpretation has tended to focus on their form from a representational perspective. Yet these motifs have resisted easy interpretation. We have previously argued that accounts of images that solely focus on representation are misconceived (Cochrane 2005; 2006; 2009; Jones 2005; 2006; 2007), as they overlook the material qualities of the rock on which they are carved, they fail to provide an adequate account of the repetitive character of carving traditions, and are unable to account for the power of images, and their dynamic role. For scholars studying the rock art and passage tomb art traditions of Britain and Ireland the inadequacy of a representational approach is made especially apparent. Rather these rock art traditions require us to ask quite different questions of prehistoric imagery; regarding their materiality, performativity, animacy and potency.

We have discussed contrasting approaches to rock art traditions in different regions of Neolithic Europe. How do these approaches compare with Neolithic figurines? The figurines of Neolithic Europe, being figurative, necessarily invite representational and stylistic analyses. Stylistic analysis involves the empirical measurement and cataloguing

of figurines for the purposes of comparison. While style is an important component of analysis, the definition of figurines by style can also be problematic. For example, Daniela Hofmann (2005) notes problems with the stylistic analyses of Linearbandkeramik figurines, which are often unhelpfully compared with figurines from South-eastern Europe. Like the static representational analysis of rock art motifs the stylistic analysis of figurines tend to isolate or abstract figurines from their individual contexts in order that they can be compared.

The empirical measurement and stylistic analysis of figurines provides the basis for analyses of representational meaning. Questions of meaning are, however, complex as the work of Douglass Bailey (2005) amply demonstrates. Bailey (2005) studies the representational power of figurines in various Neolithic cultures of South-eastern Europe and asks what is it that renders figurines as representations, investigating aspects of representation including processes of abstraction, miniaturisation and three-dimensionality. In doing so, his analysis reveals the *performative* nature of representation. In a similar sense, in a diverse discussion of the deployment of animal skeletal materials and the production of animal imagery in the Greek Neolithic, Stratos Nanoglou (2009) argues for a shift away from thinking about figurines as representations, as resembling animals. Instead, Nanoglou suggests we consider the working together of diverse elements, as a process of 'reassembling' (2009, 187). He argues that the relationship between animals and people is not a given; rather these relationships are produced by performative practice. The representation of animals is then bound up with a process of inhabiting the world in a particular way – of making the world inhabitable (Nanoglou 2009, 185).

Nakamura and Meskell (2009), discussing the rich corpus of figurines from Çatal Hüyük, Turkey likewise focus on the representational choices deployed in the production of anthropomorphic figurines at the site, and furthermore document the casual nature of figurine production and discard (see also Hodder 2010, 15). Significantly, in this context, figurines appear to have been both representations and performances.

To reiterate, we have argued that the analysis of the performative character of British and Irish rock art and passage tomb art motifs offers a fruitful line of enquiry. Notably this approach to images has been discussed for other periods of prehistory. For example, Aldhouse-Green (2004) argues for an approach to Iron Age and Roman images that takes account of their active nature along with an understanding of what they represent: '[images in later European antiquity] *were active, interactive and dynamic, highly evocative of both their cultural context and a more individualized and mutable "objectified" context*' (Aldhouse-Green 2004, 3).

If we are to provide a coherent comparison with the visual media of Central and South-eastern Europe then we need to adopt a similarly performative approach to our analysis of figurines. In both cases then, we have stressed the importance of performative approaches over more traditional stylistic or representational analyses.

Having said this, the contributors to this volume take a variety of approaches to their material, variously emphasizing the representational and/or performative character of Neolithic visual expression. In some cases, as with the attribution of the halberd image from Ri Cruin, Scotland, and the analysis of differing motif traditions in the Iberian Peninsula, the stylistic definition of the image is essential to analysis (Needham and Cowie this volume; Alves this volume), in other cases the desire to comprehend images solely as representations is less helpful.

Why do we especially emphasise performance over representation? We discuss this more generally below.

Representation, performance and materials

We propose that there is a problematic emphasis upon representation in the analysis of Neolithic visual media. We will widen our discussion and consider more general problems with the notion of representation. It is a commonplace assumption that the visual arts are representational. For example, a recent introduction to archaeological art makes the seemingly innocuous claim that: *'visual arts are filled with significance and encode many levels of information about the identity of the artists and their sociocultural context'* (Domingo Sanz *et al.* 2009, 15).

Here we observe a clear expression of the idea that visual arts primarily concern representation. They are associated with visually encoding information, and this visual information is further assumed to encode information about identity. We want to argue that this notion is based upon a false assumption that prehistoric peoples possess an ontology shared with contemporary Euro-Americans. We do not believe this to be the case; below we outline the reasons for this.

What do we mean if we consider the world to consist of representations? We assume that humans have a common capacity to reflect their experiences imaginatively as symbolic representations. Representations, in this account, are expressions of the imaginative capacity of humans visually projected onto a passive material medium. In this account people appear to be able to step outside of the current of daily life in order to reflect their experiences as visual symbols. In such models the material world – as distinct from humans – appears to play little role in the process of representation. Materials appear transparent here; they simply serve as the substrate upon which representations are overlaid. This material substrate is imagined as an inert, stable and unchanging entity awaiting the action of thoughtful human subjects.

We can question the notion of visual art as cultural representation in a number of ways. First, we can reconsider the relationship between people and the world they inhabit. In what sense are people able to abstract their experience and reflect it as a representation? Under what conditions are people able to disengage themselves from the world they live within in order to abstractly represent that world as a representation? The notion of representation assumes that ideas (or representations) exist prior to the world; they are formulated and then imposed upon the world. On the contrary, we argue that people are never distinct or separate from the world that they inhabit, they are always involved in a processes of inhabitation, therefore visual expression is probably better understood as a process of relating to the world. We assert, with the geographers Ben Anderson and Paul Harrisson, that '*thought is placed in action and action is placed in the world*' (Anderson and Harrisson 2010, 11). If we can argue that people are constantly engaged in processes of inhabitation and engagement, we need to entertain the possibility that the material world plays an active role in such processes. Rather than treating the material world as a blank and stable substrate upon which human ideas or representations are imposed we need to instead consider the possibility that humans occupy an active, vibrant and lively world of changing material forms (Bennett 2010, 20–38; Ingold 2011, 67–75). It is through attending to, and interacting with, these changing materials that visual forms are created.

The classical notion of cultural representation offers a very one-sided account of the relationship between people and their world; it assumes that the material world passively receives forms inscribed upon it by the active power of humans. Such an assumption is only possible if we analyse forms as somehow sheared from the processes and relationships that gave rise to them. Rather than thinking of visual expressions as the *outcome* of representational processes, perhaps we are best thinking of the materials of the artwork as *partners* in the process of making representations; for the art theorist Nicolas Bourriaud (2002, 14–18) art is a state of encounter, part of the social interstices that makes up human interactions. Such an argument emphasizes the artwork and the materials of art as significant components in the creation of visual expressions. Importantly we are not arguing that stylistic and semiotic approaches should be abandoned, rather that we understand the conditions that make representations possible.

Our accounts alter considerably from classical notions of cultural representation if we entertain the possibility that the materials of the world also play a significant role in a process of interaction with people. If we assume instead that existence involves active engagement with a changing world, and that it is through interaction with the changeable materials of the environment that visual arts are formed. We therefore shift away from the belief in the primacy of representation and instead consider visual arts as components of different ways of relating with the world. The approach we advocate therefore places emphasis on understanding the processes, performances and relationships bound up with expression. We have shifted in our argument away from an assumption that humans are ontologically distinct from the world that they represent, to arguing that expressions may involve differing ontological engagements with the world.

VISUAL PERSUASION

For the reasons outlined above we remain cautious of the use of the terminology 'visual culture' as it implies a representational distinction between artist and world, although we would agree with Mitchell's (2005) arguments concerning the potency of images. Similarly, we remain suspicious of cross-cultural calls for the term 'art' (see especially Morphy 2007; 2010) as this appears to shear practice from the processes, relationships and materials of its production; here the term 'art' appears as a form of meta-representational term. We build upon Morphy's (2009) assertion that 'art' is a form of action, suggesting instead that visual expression is a mode of action, and vice versa.

Following Mitchell (2005), we will now address the visual power of images (see also Freedberg 1989). For example, when considering passage tomb art, if we consider the visual motifs of passage tombs not from a panoptic-surveillance gaze (as is traditional) but instead from a panoramic or dioramic gaze, we can imagine a spectator looking at an image (such as a decorated kerbstone or orthostat), maybe standing immobile, neither controlling the visual encounter, nor empowering the visual engagement, but rather playing an interactive and creative role. The spectator is ready to participate with the visual reality placed in front of his or her body. Through these interactions – these fluid engagements – the image is able to influence the person's experience.

One of the best modern examples of the power of images is the effect produced by the poster of Kitchener saying, 'Your country needs you'. The image literally enters the viewer's 'life space', with Kitchener's direct gaze creating an interpersonal interaction (Messaris 1997, 21). Images therefore can momentarily destroy one perception of reality and instantaneously replace it with another. As such, the viewer of *any* image, be it a nineteenth century watercolour or passage tomb motif, is temporarily immersed and engaged in a world not present, a simulation of a 'world-as-a-picture'. Moreover, in considering panoramic and dioramic gazes, we can envisage spectators absorbed in the experience of artificially simulated worlds (Brett 1996, 57; Cochrane 2005, 15). These visual experiences are not stable but rather change their relations to a given reality at particular moments in time and place, creating a matrix consisting of realities within realities (Lyotard 1993, 9; Cochrane 2005, 15) or simulations within simulations. Images that assist in simulating or changing a reality are therefore much more than a static 'world-picture'. Instead they are fluid 'visual-events' or 'visual actions' devised by humans as tactics to emplace fresh visual realities within the world of everyday life (Messaris 1997, 7; de Certeau 2002, xix). In sum, '… *the process of vision consists in a never-ending, two-way process of engagement between the perceiver and his or her environment …*' (Ingold 2000, 257–58).

Having discussed visual immersion and interaction we now want to consider various practices associated with visual images. In the interests of space we confine our discussion to the related practices of collage, montage and superimposition, and to processes of erasure.

Collage, montage, erasure and superimposition

We illustrate the practices of superimposition and erasure with contemporary examples before considering prehistoric analogies. Processes of superimposition are wonderfully illustrated by the work of the contemporary artist Idris Khan. In Khan's photographic pieces, we are invited to explore visual palimpsests – nothing is erased, but rather overlaid to the point of illegibility (Dillon 2006). For instance, in his *every… page of the Holy Koran* (2004), texts from the religious book are *repeatedly* pasted upon each other producing a blur of superimposition. In another work by Khan, *every… stave of Federick Chopin's Nocturnes for the piano* (2004), the scores are subjected to similar processes of overlay and produce similar blurs. In both works, overlay masks the material traces that might allow us to interpret the thought processes that went into the 'original' makings, but they are still nevertheless present, and therefore influence the character of the newer image. Yet are we really looking at processes of erasure here? What we can surmise is that more complex pattern recognitions are being created by acts of interference. Or is it something else? Maybe a form of excess and saturation with images being imbued with too much resonance? As Khan demonstrates, this can be a form of erasure in its own right.

So what happens when you attempt to remove a surface or image? In essence, it creates new traces and residues. Examples of this process can be seen in the photographic deletions of political colleagues by particular dictators in the twentieth century, e.g., Joseph Stalin and Mao Tse-tung (Dillon 2006). These erasures can be chilling, in that the erased subject was not only visually airbrushed out of history, but also often physically erased by execution or assassination. In many examples, however, the photographic retoucher has not removed all trace of the victim, while in other instances erasure produces fresh

images (see King 1997; Farid 2006). Indeed it is a commonplace philosophical point that erasures produce presences (Derrida 1994). As with the example of the destruction of the Bāmiyān Buddhas in Afghanistan by the Taliban (Centlivres 2002, 75), motivations for these moments of erasure can be manifold, and can include ideological, political, personal and social reasons.

Acts of image erasure, however, need not always be moments of aggression or resistance. For instance, Robert Rauschenberg attempted to further explore the work of Willem de Kooning (1904–1997) by completely erasing one of his drawings (Katz 2006). This performance created the image *Erased de Kooning Drawing* (1953), and according to Rauschenberg was not inspired by negativity, but rather a desire for ongoing process (Katz 2006, 41). In this sense, and depending upon the spectator's belief system or taste, something negative has the capability to produce positive repercussions.

Considerations of processes of superimposition and erasure have important repercussions for our analyses of Irish passage tomb art and open-air rock art. For example, in considering superimposition Eogan (1997) has noted the way in which the interior of the major passage tombs of the Boyne valley, Ireland receive repeated and overlaid marks, and Jones (2007) has argued that these repetitive marks relate to mnemonic practices and the significance of these monuments in enacting a sense of place. In a similar sense Jones (2005, 2006; Jones *et al.* 2011) notes the importance of processes of superimposition and jutxtaposition in the open-air rock art of the Kilmartin region, Argyll, Scotland. He argues that the repetitive carving of images work interactively with the geological joints and cleavage planes of the rock surface, and with previously carved images, to situate successive images in narratives of place and ancestry. In terms of erasure, Muiris O'Sullivan (1986) has drawn our attention to later phases of pick dressing in Irish passage tomb contexts. With regard to this Cochrane (2009) argues that this is much less a process of removal of prior images, and more a process of *additive subtraction*, in which erasure enhances or draws attention to that which was removed; this practice was very much part of the prescribed process or sequence of interaction with passage tomb imagery.

We hope to have demonstrated that a consideration of performance therefore has a significant impact on our interpretation of prehistoric imagery. A shift towards a consideration of the performance of images has both interpretative and practical consequences. For example, we might consider the recent increase in the number of excavations associated with open-air rock art sites as part of a shift away from the simple representational documentation of motifs to a concern with how these motifs were made, how they were viewed, with how they *performed*. This final point recalls the opening quotation from Paul Klee. Art is less concerned with representing the visible, and more concerned with making the visible.

VISUALISING NEOLITHIC CHRONOLOGIES

There are immediate consequences of the performative approach we have outlined above to the archaeological study of visual media. In a traditional representational approach, the purpose of archaeology is simply to chart, map or document changing visual representations; this is typically undertaken using some form of stylistic analysis. Coupled with this are assumptions that stylistic changes relate to differing identities.

If instead, we assume that visual arts are bound up with processes of engagement and interaction within a changing material environment then the analysis of visual media becomes a process of attending to the changing way in which people relate in the world. It involves appreciating possible ontological differences expressed in these different ways of relating (e.g., Nanoglou 2009). This will of course involve a degree of stylistic documentation and analysis, but it will not divorce these stylistic approaches from their contexts. It does not involve the abandonment of issues such as identity and place, which are especially significant to the study of rock art (Domingo Sanz *et al.* 2009), but these issues are instead understood as ways of relating in the environment.

Here we want to briefly consider how the various media we discuss in this volume relate to our understanding of chronology for Neolithic Europe. Following on from this we will conclude by considering the relationship between visual media and the broader processes of sedentism and agriculture associated with the Neolithic.

Figurines emerge at an early stage in the European Neolithic, in regions such as Thessaly, Greece in *c.* 6700/6500 BC (Andreou *et al.* 1996; Perlès 2001). They continue to be produced in a variety of regions across the Balkans, such as the Pre-Cucuteni and Cucuteni-Tripolye cultures of Romania and the Ukraine beginning *c.* 5050 BC (Lazarovici 2010) – which also produces some of the most spectacular visual media, such as ceramics and house models – the Vinca culture of the central Balkans commencing *c.* 5300 BC (Chapman 1981), and the Hamangia cultures of southeastern Romania and north-eastern Bulgaria beginning *c.* 5500 BC. The production of figurines in materials such as clay, stone and bone appears at an early stage of the South-eastern European Neolithic and figurines continue to be produced throughout the Neolithic sequence of this region, with each culture and region having distinctive figurine forms. We observe a second phase of visual expression in the Varna culture of the Bulgarian Copper Age, beginning *c.* 4600 BC with copper and gold metallurgy deployed in spectacular mortuary costumes. Throughout the Neolithic sequence of South-eastern Europe we also observe the production of visually spectacular objects from shell, especially those of the species *Spondylus gaederopas*. These too, appear in the mortuary costumes of the Copper Age, at sites such as Varna and Durankulak, Bulgaria.

Figurative forms on ceramic vessels and other media appear in the Körös and AVK cultures of the Great Hungarian Plain during the 6th millennium BC (Whittle 2003, 55–60). Figurines also appear in Neolithic contexts in Central Europe, most especially those of the Linearbandkeramik culture, beginning *c.* 5700 BC on the Great Hungarian Plain. The Linearbandkeramik has both an eastern and western zone of expansion, and figurines continue to be produced into Western Europe, in regions such as central and southern Germany (Hofmann 2005; this volume). In other regions of continental Europe figurative statue stelae characterise the Neolithic, in regions such as Alpine Italy and southern France. Concentrations of stelae are known in regions such as Sardinia, Corsica and Iberia, with other examples from southern Italy, Malta, the Paris Basin, Channel Islands, Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria. These figurative stelae date from a wide chronological range *c.* 3500–2000 BC (Robb 2009, 169–70).

The Neolithic of much of Atlantic and North-western Europe differs from South-eastern Europe in terms of its visual media; in regions such as Spain, Portugal, northern Scandinavia and Britain and Ireland traditions of rock art characterise the Neolithic sequence (Cochrane *et al.* forthcoming; Alves this volume).

The date of much of this rock art is equivocal, but we have a clearer date for similar motifs in the passage tomb art tradition, especially with the Schematic art of the Iberian peninsula (Bueno Ramirez and de Balbín Behrmann 1998), with dates for megalithic/schematic art from the dolmen of Carapito, Portugal of the beginning of the 4th millennium BC (5125±70 BP and 5120±40 BP; Bueno Ramirez and de Balbín Behrmann 1998, 57), dates of the mid-4th Millennium BC from Mamoa I, Medorrras, Spain (4790±60 BP, 4420±40 BP, 5280±40 BP, 4540±65 BP, 3500±40 BP; Bueno Ramirez and de Balbín Behrmann 1998, 57). Bueno Ramirez and de Balbín Behrmann (1998, 57) also note a date of 4655±60 BP from painted megalithic art from the Antelas dolmen, north-west Spain. In addition, Manuel Calado (2002, 28–9) notes an important group of decorated standing stones or menhirs dating to the early Neolithic, sometime towards the end of the 5th millennium BC, in the Alentjo region of Portugal.

The sequence in Iberia is likely to parallel that for Brittany, France (Calado 2002). Here the sequence has been studied in detail, and suggests a complex process of Neolithic monumental development commencing in the mid-5th millennium BC with the creation of *tertres tumulaires*, long mounds of earth (Boujot and Cassen 1998). In certain regions decorated menhirs predate monumental construction. For example dates from six of the sockets of the Grand Menhir Brisé alignments are within the broad range 5300–4070 cal BC. As Scarre (2011, 76) notes there is a risk of residuality in the earliest dates, but construction in the second or third quarter of the 5th millennium BC appears to be indicated. At a later date, towards the end of the 5th millennium BC decorated menhirs are broken up and utilised in the construction of passage graves. At this stage we also see episodes of re-carving. There is much regional and chronological variation in the Breton sequence (see Scarre 2011), and not all menhirs were dismantled at the same time.

In other regions of western Europe, such as Ireland, we do not observe an earlier phase of decorated standing stones or menhirs, although some of the most thoroughly excavated sites, such as Knowth and Newgrange, Co. Meath, Ireland exhibit evidence for re-used decorated boulders. There is the potential here for overlap in the chronology and motifs with open-air rock art. The passage tomb art of Ireland is dated to the middle Neolithic to late Neolithic (3600–3100 BC; Cooney 2000; Scarre *et al.* 2003), although the final use of passage tombs may date to a later stage than this; the related passage tombs of Anglesey (see Burrow 2010) date from the middle Neolithic (*c.* 3500–2900 BC). Orcadian passage graves emerge at a slightly later date, around 3300 BC, as does the imagery of the late Neolithic settlements of Orkney (see Card and Thomas this volume).

We have raised the vexed issue of the relationship between open-air rock art and passage tomb art above. In some regions of Western Europe the two are obviously related, as noted by Bueno Ramirez and de Balbín Behrmann (1998) for Iberia (see also Alves this volume). In Britain and Ireland, the relationships are still open to question, and the dating of open-air rock art sites is still in its infancy. Recent dates obtained from sites in the Kilmartin region of Scotland, however, suggest probable 3rd millennium BC dates for rock art production activities (Jones *et al.* 2011; this volume). Other excavations in Northumbria, northern England broadly concur with this picture (Waddington *et al.* 2005). However rock art sites continue to attract attention throughout prehistory and early historic periods, and excavations around rock art sites produce a variety of later prehistoric and historic dates.

The open-air rock art of northern Scandinavia embodies yet another tradition in Neolithic Europe. The Neolithic period of this region differs considerably, as agriculture and sedentism did not impact on the prehistoric societies of this region until much later (Prescott 1996). The rock art of the Neolithic is therefore best understood as part of the continuum of Stone Age, or Northern tradition, rock art (Goldhahn *et al*. 2010; Lahelma this volume). Recent excavations in association with a Northern Tradition painted rock art site at Valkeisaari in Finland suggest dates commencing in the sub-Neolithic period, *c*. 3600 BC, with continued activity into the Early Metal period of the 2nd millennium BC (Lahelma 2008). Excavation in association with the well known rock art site of Nämforsen, Northern Sweden likewise suggests a spread of dates with activities in the Mesolithic, Neolithic and into the Iron Age (Nilsson 2010).

Unsurprisingly, our brief survey of Neolithic visual media suggests that the appearance of visually expressive forms, figurines, rock art and passage tombs conforms to the broad picture for the emergence of the Neolithic in Europe, with the early appearance of figurines in South-eastern Europe and the later appearance of rock art and passage tomb art in Western Europe. This is to be expected if we are simply tracking the progressive appearance and emergence of visual media during the Neolithic. As we argued above, however, we need to start thinking differently about the ontological character of Neolithic visual media. We conclude this survey by considering this.

RE-ENVISIONING THE NEOLITHIC

Over the last two decades it has become orthodoxy in the study of Neolithic Europe to consider the emergence of the Neolithic in terms of an ideational transformation. Ian Hodder (1990) argued that the process of domestication emerged as an idea, or set of structuring principles, prior to, or alongside, the emergence of agriculture and sedentism (see also Hodder 2010). In many ways Hodder's (1990) arguments echo those of Jacques Cauvin (2000), who also argued for a transformation of the mind as an integral component of the emergence of the Neolithic in the Levant (cf. Jaynes 1976). Cauvin (2000, 69–70) argues for the emergence of a new way of thinking related to the appreciation of a personified divinity. The arguments of both Cauvin (2000) and Hodder (1990) place the emphasis on symbolic transformations that occur with the emergence of the Neolithic. It has therefore become commonplace to consider the Neolithic in terms of the creation of new symbolic worlds (Bradley 1993; Hodder 1990; Thomas 1990; Tilley 1994; Whittle 1996). As we outlined above, such an argument rests upon the fundamental assumption that contemporary Euro-American ontology prevailed at the onset of the Neolithic. It assumes that most Neolithic people were disengaged from the environments they inhabited, and were able to abstractly reflect upon these environments in order to represent them symbolically. For example, in Hodder's (1990) terms it assumes, rather paradoxically, that the ideal of domesticity emerged prior to sedentism. On the contrary we propose that concepts are constructed through emerging practices and engagements; concepts do not simply spring to life as *a priori* representations, they must be performed and enacted.

The argument for symbolic change assumes a fundamental distinction between person and world, and overlooks the role played by the materials and environments occupied

by and with people. As we discussed above, if we reconsider this assumed ontological relationship we begin to see that in fact visual media, and indeed much Neolithic material, is not the result of an abstract symbolic process that took place in the mind, but is the result of a process of engagement and interaction with mutable materials in the environment, an ongoing process of creating fresh ontological relationships as opposed to generating symbolic representations.

The differing visual media associated with the European Neolithic might be considered as expressions of differing ontological relationships. The creation of rock art, and potentially passage tombs art, may be considered as a way of relating with place, while the creation of figurines may be considered as a way of working with, and relating with materials. Such a position raises the potential for fresh ways of thinking about the Neolithic transformation not as a process by which people wrested themselves from their hunter-gatherer origins through cognitive and symbolic transformation, but as a process by which new ontological relationships emerged through processes of engagement with the changing materials of the environment; a far less sharp and dramatic, more emergent, process of transformation.

Studies of the Neolithic period tend to emphasize animals and agriculture, materials (pottery and stone tools) or monuments as significant characteristics of the period. There is much less emphasis upon visual media or imagery. One of the aims of this volume is to foreground the significance of visual media during the Neolithic. Indeed, we have argued that visual media offer an important insight into the fresh ontological modes of relating, that were forged during the Neolithic periods; in a sense – to recall our opening quotation from Paul Klee once again – they make the Neolithic visible.

REFERENCES

Aldhouse-Green, M. 2004. *An Archaeology of Images. Iconology and Cosmology in Iron Age and Roman Europe*. London: Routledge.

Anderson, B. and Harrisson, P. 2010. The promise of non-representational theories. In B. Anderson and P. Harrisson (eds) *Taking Place: non-representational theories and geography*, 1–34. Farnham: Ashgate.

Andreou, S., Fotiadis, M. and Kotsakis, K. 1996. Review of Aegean Prehistory V: the Neolithic and Bronze Age of northern Greece. *American Journal of Archaeology* 100, 537–97.

Bailey, D. 2005. *Prehistoric Figurines. Representation and Corporeality in the Neolithic*. London: Routledge.

Barfield, L. and Chippindale, C. 1997. Meaning in the later prehistoric rock engravings of Mont Bégo, Alpes Maritimes, France. *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 63, 103–28.

Bennett, J. 2010. *Vibrant Matter. A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Boujot, C and Cassen, S. 1998. Tertres armoricains et tumulus carnacéens dans le contexte de la néolithisation de la France occidentale. In J. Guilane (ed.), *Sépultures d'occident et genèses des mégalithismes (9000–3500 avant notre ére)*, 109–126. Paris: Errance.

Bourriaud, N. 2002 *Relational Aesthetics*. Paris: Les Presses du Réel.

Bradley, R. 1993. *Altering the Earth. The Origins of Monuments in Britain and Continental Europe*. Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Monograph Series 8.

Bradley, R. 1997. *Rock Art and the Prehistory of Atlantic Europe. Signing the Land*. London: Routledge.

Bradley, R. 2009. *Image and Audience. Rethinking Prehistoric Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brett, D. 1996. *The Construction of Heritage*. Cork: Cork University Press.

Bueno Ramirez, P. and de Balbín Behrmann, R. 1998. The origin of the megalithic decorative system: graphics versus architecture. *Journal of Iberian Archaeology* 0, 53–67.

Burrow, S. 2010. Bryn Celli Ddu passage tomb, Anglesey: alignment, construction, date and ritual. *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 76, 249–270.

Calado, M. 2002. Standing stones and natural outcrops: the role of ritual monuments in the Neolithic transition of the central Alentjo, in C. Scarre (ed.), *Monuments and Landscape in Atlantic Europe. Perception and Society during the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age*, 17–35. London: Routledge.

Cauvin, J. 2000. *The Birth of Agriculture and the Origin of the Gods*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Centlivres, P. 2002. Life, death, and eternity of the Buddhas in Afghanistan. In B. Latour and P. Weibel (eds), *Iconoclash: beyond the image wars in science, religion and art*, 75–77. London: The MIT Press.

Chapman, J. 1981. *The Vinca Culture of Eouth-east Europe. Studies in Chronology, Economy and Society, 2 vols*. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports.

Cochrane, A. 2005. A taste of the unexpected: subverting mentalities through the motifs and settings of Irish passage tombs. In D. Hofmann, J. Mills and A. Cochrane (eds), *Elements of Being: mentalities, identities and movements*, 5–19. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports.

Cochrane, A. 2006. *Irish Passage Tombs. Neolithic Images, Contexts and Beliefs*. Unpublished PhD. University of Cardiff.

Cochrane, A. 2009. Additive subtraction: addressing pick-dressing in Irish passage tombs. In J. Thomas and V. Oliveira Jorge (eds), *Archaeology and the Politics of Vision in a Post-modern Context*, 163–85. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Cochrane, A., Jones, A. M. and Sognnes, K. forthcoming. Rock art and the rock surface: Neolithic rock art traditions of Britain, Ireland and northernmost Europe. In Fowler, C., Harding, J and Hofmann, D. *Oxford Handbook of Neolithic Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cooney, G. 2000. *Landscapes of Neolithic Ireland*. London: Routledge.

de Certeau, M. 2002. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. S. T. Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Derrida, J. 1994 *Specters of Marx*. London: Routledge.

Diaz-Andreu, M. 1998. Iberian post-palaeolithic art and gender: discussing human representations in Levantine art. *Journal of Iberian Archaeology* 0, 33–52.

Dillon, B. 2006. The revelation of erasure. *Tate Etc* 8, 30–37.

Domingo Sanz, I. 2009. From the form to the artists: changing identities in Levantine rock art (Spain). In I. Domingo-Sanz, D. Fiore and S. K. May (eds), *Archaeologies of Art. Time, Place, Identity*, 99–130. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.

Domingo Sanz, I., Fiore, D. and May, S. K. 2009 *Archaeologies of Art. Time, Place, Identity*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.

Eogan, G. 1997. Overlays and underlays: aspects of megalithic art succession at Brugh na Boinne, Ireland, *Brigantium* 1997, 10, 217–34.

Farid, H. 2006. Digital doctoring: how to tell the real from the fake. *Significance* 3(4), 162–166.

Freedberg, D. 1989. *The Power of Images: studies in the history and theory of response*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Goldhahn, J. 2002. Roaring rocks: an audio-visual perspective on hunter-gatherer engravings in northern Sweden and Scandinavia. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 35(1), 29–61.

Goldhahn, J. 2010. Emplacement and the hau of rock art. In J. Goldhahn, I. Fuglesvedt and A. Jones (eds), *Changing Pictures. Rock Art Traditions and Visions in Northern Europe*, 106–26. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

Goldhahn, J., Fuglestvedt, I. and Jones, A. 2010. (eds). *Changing Pictures. Rock Art Traditions and Visions in Northern Europe*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

Gjerde, J-M. 2010. 'Cracking' landscapes: new documentation – new knowledge. In J. Goldhahn, I. Fuflesvedt and A. Jones (eds) *Changing Pictures. Rock Art Traditions and Visions in Northern Europe*, 170–86. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

Helskog, K. 1999. The shore connection: cognitive landscape and communication with rock carvings in Northernmost Europe. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 32, 73–94.

Hodder, I. 1990. *The Domestication of Europe*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Hodder, I. 2010. Probing religion at Catal Hoyuk: an interdisciplinary experiment. In I. Hodder (ed.), *Religion in the Emergence of Civilization. Çatalhöyük as Case Study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press.

Hofmann, D. 2005. Fragments of power: LBK figurines and the mortuary record. In D. Hofmann, J. Mills and A. Cochrane (eds). *Elements of Being: mentalities, identities and movements*, 58–70. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports.

Hultmann, M. 2010. The known yet unknown ringing stones of Sweden. In J. Goldhahn, I. Fuglesvedt and A. Jones (eds), *Changing Pictures. Rock art traditions and visions in Northern Europe,* 60–72. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

Ingold, T. 2000. *The Perception of the Environment: essays in livelihood, dwelling and skill*. London: Routledge.

Ingold, T. 2011. *Being Alive: essays on movement, knowledge and description*. London: Routledge.

Jaynes, J. 1976. *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Jones, A. 2005. Between a rock and a hard place. Rock art and mimesis in Neolithic and Bronze Age Scotland. In V. Cummings and A. Pannett (eds), *Set in Stone: new approaches to Neolithic monuments in Scotland*, 107–17. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

Jones, A. 2006. Animated images. Images, agency and landscape in Kilmartin, Argyll. *Journal of Material Culture* 11 (1/2), 211–26.

Jones, A. 2007. *Memory and Material Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jones, A., Freedman, D., Lamdin-Whymark, H., O'Connor, B., Tipping, R. and Watson, A. 2011. *An Animate Landscape: rock art and the prehistory of Kilmartin, Argyll*. Oxford: Windgather Press.

Katz, V. 2006. A genteel iconoclasm. *Tate Etc* 8, 38–41.

King, D. 1997. *The Commissar Vanishes: falsification of photographs and art in the Soviet Union*. London: Canongate Books.

Lahelma, A. 2008. *A Touch of Red. Archaeological and Ethnographic Approaches to Interpreting Finnish Rock Paintings*. ISKOS 15. Helsinki: Finnish Antiquarian Society.

Lahelma, A. 2010. Hearing and touching Rock art: Finnish rock paintings and the non-visual. In J. Goldhahn, I. Fuflesvedt and A. Jones (eds), *Changing Pictures. Rock Art Traditions and Visions in Northern Europe*, 48–59. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

Lazarovici, C-M. 2010. Cucuteni ceramics: technology, typology, evolution and aesthetics. In D. W. Anthony (ed.), *The Lost World of Old Europe. The Danube Valley 5000–3500 BC*, 128–61. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

Messaris, P. 1997. *Visual Persuasion: the role of images in advertising*. London: SAGE Publications.

Mitchell, W. J. T. 2005. *What do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Morphy, H. 2007. *Becoming Art: exploring cross-cultural categories*. Oxford: Berg.

Morphy, H. 2009. Art as a mode of action: some problems with Gell's art and agency. *Journal of Material Culture* 14(1), 5–27.

Morphy, H. 2010. Art as action, art as evidence. In D. Hicks and M. Beaudry (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture*, 265–90. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nakamura, C. and Meskell, L. 2009. Articulate bodies: forms and figures at Catalhöyük. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 16, 205–30.

Nanoglou, S. 2009. Animal bodies and ontological discourse in the Greek Neolithic. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 16, 184–204.

Nilsson, P. 2010. Reused rock art: Iron Age activities at Bronze Age rock art sites. In J. Goldhahn, I. Fuflesvedt and A. Jones (eds), *Changing Pictures. Rock Art Traditions and Visions in Northern Europe*, 154–69. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

Nordbladh, J. 1978. Images as messages in society. Prologomena to the study of Scandinavian petroglyphs and semiotics. In K. Kristiansen and C. Paludan-Muller (eds), *New Directions in Scandinavian Archaeology*. Studies in Prehistory and Early History I, 63–79. Copenhagen: National Museum Press.

O'Sullivan, M. 1986. Approaches to passage tomb art. *Journal Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 116, 68–83.

Perlés, C. 2001. *The Early Neolithic in Greece*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Prescott, C. 1996. Was there really a Neolithic in Norway? *Antiquity* 70, 77–87.

Robb, J. 2009. People of stone: Stelae, personhood, and society in prehistoric Europe. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 16, 162–83.

Scarre, C. 2011. *Landscapes of Neolithic Brittany*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Scarre, C., Arias, P., Burenhult, G., Fano, M., Oosterbeek, L., Schulting, R., Sheridan, A. and Whittle, A. 2003. Megalithic Chronologies, in G. Burenhult and S. Westergaard (ed.) *Stones and Bones. Formal disposal of the dead in Atlantic Europe during the Mesolithic–Neolithic interface 6000–3000 BC. Archaeological conference in honour of the Late professor Michael J. O'Kelly,* 65–112. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports S1201.

Thomas, J. 1990. *Rethinking the Neolithic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tilley, C. 1991. *Material Culture and Text. The Art of Ambiguity*. London: Routledge.

Tilley, C. 1994. *A Phenomenology of Landscape. Places, Paths and Monuments*. Oxford: Berg.

Tilley, C. 2006. *Body and Image: explorations in landscape phenomenology*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Tilley, C. and Thomas, J. 1993. The axe and the torso: symbolic structures in the Neolithic of Brittany. In C. Tilley (ed.) *Interpretative Archaeology*, 225–324. Oxford: Berg.

Waddington, C., Johnson, B. and Mazel, A. 2005. Excavation of a rock art site at Hunterheugh Crag, Northumberland. *Archaeologia Aeliana* 34 (5th Series), 29–54.

Whittle, A. 1996. *Europe in the Neolithic. The Creation of New Worlds*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Whittle, A. 2000. 'Very like a whale': menhirs, motifs and myths in the Mesolithic–Neolithic transition of northwest Europe, *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 10, 243–259.

Whittle, A. 2003. *The Archaeology of People. Dimensions of Neolithic life*. London: Routledge.

Wrathall, M. 2011. The phenomenological relevance of art, in J. D. Parry (ed.), *Art and Phenomenology*, 9–30. Routledge: London.