Enculturating environments: the archaeology of interior South-Central California

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**Enculturating environments:** In what ways do humans enculturate different environments, be they hunter-gatherers, agriculturalists, or urban dwellers? How does this change through time, from colonization through subsequent periods and into historical & modern times? Here, we investigate hunter-gatherer practices from initial colonization to Euro-American colonial encounters, working within the under researched interior of South-Central California. Our aim is to understand social relationships played out between people and landscape, seen in the enculturation of the environment through rock-art, other forms of material culture, inhabitation, and land-use.
Environmental archaeology: Our investigations begin with understanding how past people engaged with their environment through time. We employ geo-archaeological techniques to track changes in soil sediments, biotic communities, and landscape morphology.
Site environs survey: mapping locales:

Through digital survey techniques, we map rock-art sites and their extended environs to understand the spatial dynamics of past human occupation as well as create data for Geographic Information Systems analyses.

Mapping the environment around the rock-art site of Pleito: Dr. Jenn Perry and Anwen Cooper

Mapping the Main Cave at Pleito.
Advanced digital modelling

Using survey data, we construct digital models of rock-art sites to investigate visual relations between rock-art and other archaeological components.

Top; photograph of Pond rock-art site. Bottom; digital model of site. Right; viewshed of site, seen from above.
High definition digital scanning of rock-art and cave surfaces forms a core component of investigating the ways people enculturated interior micro-environments. Fugitive elements and areas of differential weathering are explored.
Excavating material culture

Excavation of rock-art sites, now a major focus of our research, explores site occupancy and chronology. Results already indicate Late Period and Historical occupation within the site of Pinwheel Cave showing the importance of these locales for indigenous people into the 19th century. It also shows the materials used from local and more distant landscapes.

Top: Alice Clough and Kate Jopling document excavated units in Pinwheel Cave
Middle: Examples of Late Prehistoric and Historical artefacts from recent excavations.
Bottom: In situ fibrous materials, perhaps tobacco ‘chews’ used by the cave inhabitants.
For further information on the Enculturating Environment Project, contact DWRobinson@uclan.ac.uk, or f.sturt@soton.ac.uk