LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

Archaeology Seminar Series 2021

An Ice Age Art Gallery in Amazonia? The End of the Journey Project

José Iriarte
University of Exeter

MARCH

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South America was the final continental migratory challenge of humans on their global expansion. This migration took place amidst one of the most significant climatic, environmental, and subsistence regime shifts in human history – the Late Pleistocene/Early Holocene transition – which contributed to the extinction of megafauna, plant domestication, and today's remarkable diversity of indigenous South American groups. This presentation summarises work of the European Research Council-funded Last Journey Project in north-western South America, with an emphasis on the findings from our recent excavations in the Colombian Amazon and a discussion of the intriguing depictions of Ice Age megafauna found by the team.

TIME & DATE

Zoom Webinar, Thursday 8:30 pm, Australian Eastern Daylight Time, Melbourne, Australia (Meeting registration in advance required).

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SPEAKER BIO

Professor José Iriarte directs the University of Exeter Archaeobotany and Paleoecology Laboratory and the Centre for the Archaeology of the Americas. Professor Iriarte is an archaeologist and archaeobotanist with a strong track record of research on human-environmental interactions, the development of agricultural economies, and the emergence of complex societies in lowland South and Central America. He has extensive experience in directing and participating in a wide range of international multidisciplinary projects integrating archaeology, archaeobotany, palaeoecology, palaeoclimate, soil science, remote sensing (Lidar), ancient DNA, and modern ecology across Latin America. Recently, the work of his research group on lowland South American landscapes has documented the third global event of rice domestication in Amazonia, chartered unexplored regions of Amazonia documenting earth-building societies along its entire southern rim, predicting to have reached 5 million people in pre-Columbian times, and revealed the lasting repercussions of polyculture agroforestry on Amazonian Dark Earths. His work has significantly revised the role of climate in cultural developments across Amazonia, as well as the human footprint on the expansion of *Araucaria* forests in southern Brazil.