

# Bringing art and science together: body painting for a more understandable palaeoscience.

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## Abstract

Society demands sound science communication schemes, as scientific concepts need to be informed to the general public in the most objective, evidence-based way possible. Communicating science should be indeed a corner-stone of Academia, as long as these publicly funded institutions have a compromise with society making findings available to tax payers.

However we, as researchers, often fail to communicate our findings probably due to several reasons: lacking the proper training as communicators; outreach is often not considered a milestone by science evaluators and, most often, because explaining complex concepts for non-academics is a difficult task. The case of palaeosciences is paramount of the latter, where even basic principles are sometimes difficult to communicate. While palaeosciences are essential to understand current Global Change, transmitting their findings and the scope of its evidences becomes challenging. Palaeosciences operate at multiple spatio-temporal scales, often connecting interpretative principles from current day processes and mechanisms with those of the past.

On a different realm of human cognition, frequently taken far from science, we find art. Art, especially painting and drawing, has the power of reconciling us with our reality, reawakening the essence of the easily forgotten value of our own lives by making ordinary occasions or items enticing. This is even more seductive when different media are used in the artistic process, pulling observers attention in a faster way, besides accomplishing a pedagogic function. Such is the case of body painting, that has rarely been used as a didactic tool but that it offers endless opportunities given the flexible, mobile and versatile nature of the media used.

Intending to communicate to the wider public why palaeosciences are critical to tackle current day problems, we present a dynamic video performance using body painting to explain landscape evolution, proxy production and deposition, patterns and processes at long-term scales and the interpretative principles featuring palaeoscientific knowledge.