

Seminario

The Rock Art of Serrania del Chiribiquete: a geoarcheological and geomorphological heritage in the heart of the Amazon

Tuesday, 29 April 2025 – 16:30, Aula Arduino

Relatore:

Dr. Carlos Castaño Uribe – Fundación Herencia Ambiental Caribe, Colombia



The Chiribiquete Massif is a chain of table mountains rising with vertiginous cliffs of quartz-sandstones over the Colombian Amazon, representing the westernmost part of the Proterozoic Guayana Shield. This remote stunning geomorphological formation, enclosed in what is now the biggest National Park of tropical forest in the world, did not appear on maps until 1989, when anthropologist Carlos Castaño Uribe, observing the cliffs bordering the mountain, documented for the first time thousands of enigmatic rock paintings—masterfully drawn by an unknown ancient indigenous population. More than thirty years after this initial discovery, in December 2024, an expedition led by Castaño Uribe, alongside speleologists from the Italian association La Venta Esplorazioni Geografiche, uncovered a new series of mural paintings depicting the mythological figures of jaguar-men. In addition the expedition discovered the source of the iron hydroxide pigments mined in complex natural caves previously unknown for the area. Recent scientific analysis, in part also performed in the laboratories of the Department of Geoscience of the University of Padova, suggests that these artworks may be among the oldest traces of human arrival in South America. These new discoveries in what is often called “The Sistine Chapel of the Amazon” will be described by Carlos Castaño Uribe, showing the importance of multidisciplinary research and of continuative collaboration between anthropologists, geoarchaeologists, and geomorphologists to unravel the fascinating story of the first human arrival in the Amazon.

Proponente: **Francesco Sauro**

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