

Council on Archaeological Studies at Yale

Archaeology Brown Bag Series, 2022-23

Benjamin Davies

Making Sense of the Surface: Mobility, Re-Use, and the Significance of Lithic Scatters



This lecture looks at a case study from semi-arid western New South Wales, Australia, where informal stone artifacts appear in varying densities across the surface due to recent and long-term geomorphic processes. Agent-based computer simulations are used like middle-range analogues to assess the effects of mobility and occupation frequency on assemblage characteristics, particularly the abundance of cortical stone as a measure of movement in the past; further analysis draws in part on ethnographic observations, to assess the impacts of lithic recycling on the distribution of artifact sizes within these assemblages. From the interplay between aggregates and formal models, a different view of the surface record arises, one that foregrounds the emergent properties of the record when viewed from the landscape scale.

Dr. Ben Davies is Tony Massini Postdoctoral Fellow in Data Science in the Yale Paleoarchaeology Lab. He received a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Auckland, and undertook a postdoctoral study at the University of Utah. His research is focused on archaeological landscapes and coupled natural human systems in Oceania and Africa, making use of computer simulation to understand how patterns form in the archaeological record.

Friday, October 7th at **12:00pm**,
51 Hillhouse Ave, Seminar Room