MAX PLANCK SCHOOL of cognition

Monday, May 13th 2024, 16:00 (CET)

Cognition Colloquium

Dr. Philipp Gunz

Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig, Germany

A Mind Set in Stone: Fossil Traces of Human Brain Evolution

Brains do not fossilise, but as they grow and expand during fetal and infant development, they leave an imprint within the bony braincase. Identifying sulcal imprints on fossil endocasts is often challenging. To address this, we have established a comparative primate framework based on both brains and corresponding endocasts from the same individuals. We collect primate brains and skulls post-mortem from animals that have died naturally at field sites in Africa and at European zoos. Combining data from fossil skulls, ancient genomes, brain imaging and gene expression helps shed light on the evolutionary changes shaping the human brain. I will discuss milestones of hominin brain evolution spanning more than 3 million years: from the evolution of brain growth in Lucy and her kind, to developmental differences between modern humans and Neanderthals.

Join online:
https://zoom.us/j/93526030034?pwd=ZkJnYlFVOEthU2lDeE5nVmV6TlZLZz09

Meeting ID: 935 2603 0034
Passcode: 250171