

PREFACE

This small but selective volume focuses on objects that are out of the ordinary, not only in the sense that they imitate other objects, but also in the sense that they cannot serve the same purpose as the originals. As imitations, simulations, fakes and illusions, they deceive, pretend and distract – while also being displayed in such a way as to draw attention to themselves. In most cases, their anomalous status as curiosities makes it impossible to interpret them on the individual level. By adopting a more holistic perspective, however, we can shift our focus away from the individual cases, viewing them instead in the context of a broader cultural phenomenon. The essays collected here aim to shed light on this phenomenon, explore its diverse manifestations, question the purpose(s) of these objects and discuss their social implications.

The origins of this publication lie in session #259 *The Creative Reinterpretation of Material Culture in Prehistoric Societies: A Reappraisal*, organised by Ariane Ballmer and Daniel Neumann at the 25th Annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists in Bern, 4–7 September 2019. Three papers from this session are published in the book (Ballmer & Neumann; Kaul et al.; Marangou), along with three further guest contributions (Amkreutz & Fontijn; Cabanillas de la Torre & Gomez de Soto; Cassen & Grimaud).

We wish to express our gratitude to the authors for their valuable contribution and their patience during the preparation of the publication. Thanks are also due to H el ene Blitte of the Cantonal Museum of Archaeology and History in Lausanne and Julia Hahn of the Romano-Germanic Commission of the German Archaeological Institute for their editorial support.

We dedicate this book to David Fontijn, our colleague and mentor, who sadly passed away in 2023. In our minds, he will continue to stimulate our thinking.

**Ariane Ballmer
Daniel Neumann
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