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# Beyond Belief

journey of the  
rain animals

7 April 2022

Free  
Room 3  
#Objects in focus





# Petroglyph with engraved quagga

1000 – 2000 BP

## Wildebeest Kuil, South Africa

Wildebeest Kuil is one of the most significant open-air rock art sites in South Africa, with more than 600 San rock engravings.

The San peoples are the oldest inhabitants of southern Africa, where they have lived for at least 20,000 years. The visual expression of their rock art is a powerful reflection of their belief systems.

One of the central shared rituals in San society is the spiritual journey known as the 'trance dance'. Medicine people or shamans access the spirit world through altered states of consciousness and harness supernatural powers to heal the sick, control animals, and make rain. Some of the engravings of animals at this site may evoke the San 'rain animal' or have been inspired by visions experienced during the trance dance

Wildebeest Kuil is the site of a series of ponds (kuils) that, even today, hold water longer than any other for miles around. It was an important meeting place for animals and people; a symbolic landscape exemplifying the practical and spiritual significance of water.





# Petroglyph with engraved quagga

1000 – 2000 BP

Wildebeest Kuil, South Africa

Andesite

Petroglyphs (engraved rock art) are powerful cultural symbols that reflect the complex societies, belief systems and sacred landscapes of the San|Bushmen in southern Africa. This depiction of a quagga (a species of plains zebra, now extinct) has an exceptional meaning as it represents a spiritual relation between the San peoples and their rain dance beliefs

Donated by F. Schute (Royal Colonial Institute) Af1886,1123.1

