Given their aesthetic, symbolic, and epistemological underpinnings, prehistoric inscribed or image-bearing artifacts such as architectural paintings have long been treated as a ‘transcendent’ category of archaeological finds, to be investigated in isolation from their broader contexts and even from their own materiality.

This dissertation revisits one of the richest corpuses of architectural paintings in prehistoric Southwest Asia, uncovered at the Anatolian site of Çatalhöyük (c. 7100-5900 BC), with a specific focus on their spatial contexts, materialities, temporalities and daily experience. Through a diversified set of archaeological methods including spatial analysis, cross-sectional analysis, photogrammetry and virtual reconstruction, this research shows how deeply integrated paintings were within the practices and rhythms that constituted daily life at the Neolithic site.

These interconnected research threads compose an understanding of architectural paintings that significantly differs from the ocularcentric narrative of the disembodied image, one where the emphasis is on the act of painting itself and its associated practices, rather than on the paintings’ visual content.