

Seeing is Believing

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Guests

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Introduction

Seeing objects from the past in museum exhibition cases is one thing, but seeing how those objects would have been handled by the ancient people who made them is even better! In this month's episode of #FinallyFriday, Matilda is joined by two experts focusing on different ways that we can visualise the past. **Dr Yvonne Lammers-Keijsers** is a keen re-enactor and an experienced archaeologist specialised in usewear analysis, experimental archaeology, and public outreach. **Frank Wiersema** is a professional photographer and videographer specialised in staging scenes from the past through collaborations with living history and experimental archaeology.

Transcript

It's the first Friday of the month, which means that it's time for the next episode of #FinallyFriday, bringing you insights and discussions from around the world, focussing on experimental archaeology, ancient technology, archaeological open-air museums and interpretation.

Matilda: Hello and welcome to #FinallyFriday. My name is Matilda Siebrecht and today I am joined by two specialists from our EXARC community focussing on the visualisation of the past. Dr. Yvonne Lammers-Keijsers is a keen re-enactor and an experienced archaeologist specialised in usewear analysis, experimental archaeology and public outreach. Her work, as part of the managerial team at the Prehistoric Village at Eindhoven museum, focuses on designing, creating and managing exhibitions, organising the large team of volunteers and re-enactors and creating and implementing educational events.

Frank Wiersema is a professional photographer and videographer specialised in staging scenes from the past through collaborations with living history and experimental archaeology. His work has been used in exhibitions throughout Europe and attempts through this visual medium to bring the past alive for a broader audience.

So welcome to both of you. And I have a very quick question to start you off. It seems like an obvious one, but I'm always curious how the experts themselves might put things into their own words for the listeners. So why do you think it's so important to provide an actual visualisation of the past, rather than just, for example, showing the artefacts as we find them? Perhaps Yvonne, you could start us off?

Yvonne: Yeah, thank you Matilda. I think it's a quite obvious answer as well. The artefacts were part of lives and of people's day-to-day business. So I think it's better to demonstrate the way they functioned in the past than to see them as almost art-like objects and to present them in that way. So I think visualisation should always be a part of demonstrating artefacts and telling about the past.

Matilda: Would you agree, Frank?

Frank: Yeah, I wholeheartedly agree with what Yvonne says. I pretty much do the same thing with objects from the past, showing how they were used in a context, a realistic real-life setting. In my profession, specifically photography, I do believe that that helps very much with making the past come to life in the sense that a photograph is somehow..., even if it's just subconsciously, it does have this pretence of being true. People look at a photograph... so they have this... even subconscious feeling of, okay, this is the truth. And it's really nice to be able to use that to make people feel more involved. If you stage a scene rather than, for instance, just making a nice snapshot of a day out in an open-air museum looking at re-enactors on a nicely-mowed lawn. Instead of that, just staging a scene in a hyper realistic way, then as an audience you get more of that emotional attachment with what's actually going on in that image. So that really helps people to connect with that part of the past, I believe.

Yvonne: So Frank, in a way you say that you think a photograph is better than re-enactors?

Frank: No, no, not at all, I don't at all mean to come across like that. A photograph of a re-enactment event is of course a very different thing than an actual re-enactment event, because if you are at an event then you have real people in front of you who actually are persons that make you realise what life was like back then. And that is still the most powerful way to visualise the past. Making a photograph is using a completely different medium. So then rather than having a person that you can actually face-to-face talk to, you have to communicate that just with a still image. Then it comes in handy that you can actually stage it in a way that you can communicate that without having the actual person talking to you. So yeah, it's just a completely different medium.

Yvonne: Yeah, but I think that's also the difficulty with making a photograph that you have to make choices and you can't explain why you made the choices or you can't explain that you considered two things and you had to choose one and the other one might have been a similar option. You were talking about that it's a true image, people feel that it's true when you see an image or when you see a visualisation and that's also I think the danger in it.

Frank: Very true. Because if there is something in that image that is off to people's opinions, then they will most certainly be on it. As long as you can justify all the choices that you have made. The farther you go back in the past, the more options indeed you have to choose from and people will

always feel that the other option would've been the more realistic one. So yeah, there will always be debates on all that.

Yvonne: For instance - it was not a photograph, but it was in 'Het verhaal van Nederland' (documentary series about the history of The Netherlands) - they chose to paint the faces of the people from the Stone Age and I immediately had a lot of questions from visitors, asking us 'how do they know that they painted their faces or tattooed their faces?'. And it was such a strong image which you could not avoid, watching that particular scene, that I would never have chosen to paint those faces because all the attention was going to these tattoos or paintings or whatever, which you don't know anything about. I would've focused more on the clothes, which you have a little bit information about. How do you think about those choices and where do you put emphasis on or where do you say, okay, this is not what I'm going to do?

Frank: Yeah, that is indeed a very interesting point and I do almost feel the struggle of the person who was responsible for making those choices. Because we do know that people adorned themselves because we do of course have things that indicate jewellery or stuff that they adorned their clothes with but we don't know how. They did use ochre, because we find that in graves. So they might have painted themselves with that, they might not have. The thing is, especially going back all the way to the Stone Age, then... we simply don't know. So if you stick with everything that you do know, then you also don't get a realistic visualisation of the past. But when you do decide to go for face paint then you know for a fact that what you're showing is not exactly how they did it, because that would be too much of a coincidence.

Yvonne: I think especially faces are so important for people... that's the main attraction of what you see. I would put the emphasis more on the things you know and you take that away by using face paint, I think. But that's why I would never do that because you do know what their tools were and you do know about certain adornments, you are sure. We do know that they used shells or amber. I was intrigued why they made this choice because it's so 'in your face'.

Frank: It very much puts the emphasis on that and in way it also showed a difference between different tribes, but yeah, that's all so much speculation. It's a difficult choice. I have used face paint once in a scene from the Neolithic and that was when I staged the burial ritual from the Funnel Beaker culture. And I wanted the shaman to look very different from the rest of the crowd. So I painted his face white and it made an impression that probably also would've made an impression in the lives of people back then. But then it really had a specific function and it needed to draw that kind of attention, make it a little bit more otherworldly. So yeah, you need to be very cautious with these types of choices.

Yvonne: Yeah, I agree. That's what we do in the museum as well. We try to make conscious decisions about those kind of things, especially.

Matilda: Do you find for example, Yvonne, you work a lot with volunteer re-enactors as well. Did they have the archaeological experience to be able to make those choices themselves? Or does the museum suggest certain parts of their outfit that maybe they should leave off? How much flexibility do they have?

Yvonne: Many of course don't have a background in archaeology, so we provide a reader with a lot of information. Of course, if I see people wearing things that I'm a little bit suspicious about then I have a discussion with them, show them what we know and what the skills were that people had. And in my museum specifically, we have a lot of people who started in the early days, so 35-40 years ago even, when the knowledge was less profound and the 'game' of playing as if you lived in

the past was more important than visualising the past as authentically as you can. So they don't even realise sometimes that we know a lot more now, but if I show them and demonstrate what we know and what we think it should look now, they are all enthusiastic and they all want to change. The interest in the past is genuine. As a scientist, you think differently than as an enthusiastic experimental volunteer. Volunteers want rules and if they're very serious, then they say, 'okay, I have to have an example and then I can only replicate that example' and then you end up with all people wearing the same hat, which is not very realistic. It's very difficult to explain to them what the boundaries are and what you can do and can't do and how you can play around with these boundaries. I think that's the most difficult thing.

Frank: But I can also imagine that the people who are in your pool of re-enactors, that even though they might not all have the most specialist knowledge that at least they are enthusiastic about the past, so that they probably do want to get it right and want to learn more?

Yvonne: They definitely want to get it right so it's not really a big problem. On the other hand you see that the whole hobby of doing re-enactments is growing. And then many people say, 'okay, but I don't have money, so I can't do it right'. So you can't always demand from people that whatever they do is how you would like it because I want to keep them as volunteers as well.

Frank: Yeah, you don't wanna scare them off or temper their enthusiasm...

Yvonne: On the other hand I want to have it as authentically as possible, so they have to do their best. But as a museum, we provide a lot of clothes as well.

Frank: Oh, that helps.

Yvonne: Yeah, that helps a lot.

Matilda: I suppose as you were mentioning, you have to kind of work with what you have in ways. So obviously at the museum, hopefully they'd have indeed lots of lovely replica, authentic clothing. For example, Frank, with the people you are working with, are they professional re-enactors, shall we say, are they just sort of volunteer re-enactors? Do they have that archaeological experience to know what is authentic? How hard is it to differentiate between those people who are just playing being in the past and those people who do have that interest, how can you make that distinction as the professional photographer in that situation?

Frank: Well, with me it's of course very much different than for Yvonne, because I make images where you only see the persons in a still image, so they don't talk to you so they don't have to have knowledge and information themselves. I basically need to cast and yeah, there is this difficulty with somehow the world of re-enactors, I don't know why, but Yvonne, I don't know if you have the problem as well, that re-enactors tend to be very Northwest European, meaning white and blonde and blue-eyed and stuff. So when I make, for instance, images on the Middle Stone Age or even the Neolithic then I cannot really use a cast of re-enactors if they don't look the part. If we know, for instance, from DNA research that people in the Middle Stone Age were dark of skin, or people from the Funnel Beaker culture were more Turkish or Mediterranean-looking then I have to cast models who look that way. So then they don't necessarily are re-enactors or have any knowledge on the past but that's fine. As long as I can direct them and they are willing to act that out then it works out. Photography is a very visual medium, so it needs to look good, that's the first priority. And then it's more me and the client or the museum that I work with for instance, that are then responsible that everything in the image is correct. And then use models who can actually act that out.

Yvonne: I think, Matilda, what you're asking is if there's a difference between kind of professional re-enactors and more volunteer re-enactors and there is. We have a few professional re-enactors that you can be sure of that they have enough background to be very authentic. So even if you want to make photographs or film, you can hire them. What Frank says is true for some periods that's not enough because they're all very white and Northwestern European-looking, but for later periods that's completely fine.

Frank: When I do work with either volunteers or employees of a museum itself, when they do, for instance, have their own gear and their own clothes and stuff, then they can wear that in a different way than when you dress a model in the sense that they are really in their character. And that is a different way of working than when the model does not have that same background and you dress them up. But if you have good models then they can totally get into it. It won't show up in the picture, but there's a difference.

Matilda: You both mentioned this idea that the world of re-enactment is more for a particular, shall we say race or class of people, who I guess can afford to do the re-enactment or have that privilege of being able to do that in their free time, which the majority of society might not be able to. Do you see that improving? Is there more diversity coming into re-enactment or do you have kind of ideas?

Yvonne: I think you misinterpret this because there is a lot of diversity, especially in class or background or richer and poor, that's not a problem. I think the diversity which is lacking is totally logical. It's because people with a non-Northern European background are not necessarily interested in the Iron Age or Stone Age of the Netherlands. Of course they are very welcome. We did a lot in the museum, actually, to try and improve this diversity by changing the website texts and if we search for new people we change all these texts. But still it's a lot of white Northwestern European background people who are trying to get in and I think that's completely logical.

Frank: That's actually a very good point that you made. I didn't even think of it that way, that it is indeed the history of Northwest Europe, that it's obvious that Northwest European people are more interested in that. I did notice when I was making pictures of the Mesolithic with a cast that had darker skin, it is of course a very recent insight that people back then looked dark of colour. It takes a while, of course, to let that drip through to the level of then people picking that up as re-enactors, because when I was working with them they were very interested and when I dressed them up and put them in a Mesolithic hut, then it really looked like a cosy family. They felt really at home, so they could imagine themselves being hunter-gatherers in Europe. Because the insights are very recent it will just take some time for that to really sink in.

Yvonne: Yeah, I think so too. The diversity in our visitors is very broad. It's maybe just a matter of time, because we have many visitors who are very enthusiastic about especially prehistory. Some of them literally say 'we recognize a lot from back home, ancient times'. There's a lot of recognition. So maybe in 10 years time, we'll have a lot of volunteers out of this group, I don't know, we'll see. But we had some experiences which were not so nice, because not everyone in the public is open to these kind of re-enactors.

Frank: I did not really notice that when I was releasing my pictures.

Matilda: If I remember correctly, you first did similar scenes, but with Northwest European re-enactors as the main subjects, and then did the similar scenes. How was the response to that?

Frank: Well, I expected some backlash of course, because people always have an opinion. Indeed, when I first made pictures on the Mesolithic the DNA research wasn't done yet, showing that these people were dark of colour. When I redid them and launched them, actually, the negative responses that I did get was that these people look too African. And they do have of course a point because the people that I tried to depict are of course Northwest European people, but with a dark skin colour. So they don't need to look like African people, but then they have to realise I have to have in front of my camera people that actually exist. You cannot really summon up someone from 8,000 years ago! I did make a point of it to cast people who have that type of bone structure that matches the skulls that we have, so like the sharper cheek bones, the slender noses and stuff. So I did take all these things into account, but of course you will have people with African genes if you want a darker skin colour, because I didn't want to go blackface because I find that to be much more wrong actually. It was kind of funny that people then did acknowledge the fact that they needed to be dark of colour, but then that was the thing that they were nitpicking on.

Matilda: Which I guess just goes to show indeed how important it is to have this visualisation of the past, because otherwise people do just imagine it in their heads and sometimes, unfortunately, that is a very biased visualisation. If we're talking about responses from the public, are there particular favourite scenes, time periods, events, objects? Do you notice that people are drawn to a particular time period or culture more than others?

Yvonne: In general, families with small children, they tend to like fighters, Roman fighters, Viking fighters, medieval fighters, doesn't really matter as long as there's a lot of bling-bling and a lot of fighting going on. But I think everything that surprises is very attractive. So when we did our project on the Iron Age dress, the fact that it was so colourful and the representation of something 3000 years old, that was so surprising that that was very attractive for visitors to see. And also I think, things that they really recognize. So recognition is also very important.

Frank: I can recognize that indeed. A thing that pops to mind for my personal experience is for instance when I made a picture that showed the process of beer brewing in the Stone Age. I got a lot of responses in a positive way that 'oh, were they doing that back then?' And you can actually back that up with a lot of information that we do know from the archaeology. That element of being able to surprise people and having that recognizability in there, that helps.

Matilda: I'm now thinking myself as well, like earlier today, unfortunately I can't remember the artist, but it popped up on my Instagram, an artist who does scenes from the past and he'd painted this really adorable picture of a Neanderthal father looking at his daughter, you know, like a new baby daughter. And I'm relating to them because it's a sort of scene.... But then also at the same time, I remember the first time I ever learned that the Parthenon marbles and everything would all have been brightly coloured with yellows and reds and everything. And it just gives you a completely different view! Do you then play on that a little bit because obviously at the end of the day, I guess, you are both in a business?

Yvonne: We definitely do, yes. If I have an event, then I always make sure that people can recognize things from their own experience. We are working with forgotten vegetables at the moment a lot. Also fermenting is very trendy. So then we show them that they did the same thing in the Iron Age. We use that, yes.

Frank: I can definitely relate to that as well. I see photography also as a means of communication and I'm very much trained of course, to be always very conscious of what is it that I want to communicate and how do you best get that message through. So I do also with my photos tend to go a little bit off of the beaten track, not make the obvious choices. We have some evidence that

people in the Mesolithic hunter-gatherers... that the hunters were women as well. So I let female persons hunt and then people are a little bit surprised by that. Every decision that you make is a conscious decision, so you can always play around a little bit with, okay, let's go for the less obvious option. So I definitely use that.

Matilda: I'm also just curious, obviously, the episode theme today is visualisation of the past, but, I know that Frank you also work a lot with videos and clips, which would also incorporate sounds then. And I imagine with things like re-enactment sounds but also smells. All of the senses become involved in that aspect of it. Do you find that, for example, the visual effects is the most important? Are there things that you can also play with in terms of sound and smell? Frank, from videos, I guess smell isn't that big a thing, but, maybe you could bottle things and send it out to people!

Frank: Oh, that'd be great. I do know when I am in... whatever kind of open-air museum, it doesn't matter which time period you're in... the moment you step in whatever kind of dwelling, house, and when there's a fire burning and you smell the fire, the first response that any person will have is, 'oh, it's cozy here'. Because smell triggers such a powerful, profound, emotional response. Same goes for beer brewing. When you have that smell of malts, making these malt sugars and you get this sweet smell as if you're stepping into a bakery, that makes you happy!

Yvonne: Yeah, I think all the senses are important, smelling, feeling, listening. We definitely try to have music during events, the fire's always burning, the smithy has a certain smell and makes a lot of sound, which are giving you kind of a feeling of home or, something is happening, the animals as well. So it's all types of smell, not just nice ones, but also strong ones. Feeling, I think, that's also a thing that's really important. I always like to feel everything, from loam walls to fabrics, pottery... I think that's very important and especially for our visitors and children, it's good to have all these senses. And we always say, you have to go home dirty, with smoke in your hair and loam on your hands. That's when you really experience the past. It's not just images you see. I think that's the big difference between Frank's work and ours is that you can be part of our picture and not just watch it. I think those other senses, you have to think of something, Frank...

Frank: No, you're absolutely right. I mean, when you just talk about it, I already miss being in an open-air museum and having that all-round experience.

Yvonne: Yeah, but on the other hand, I have to leave a lot of things out, because people are touching everything, so you can't have everything there because they also will break it or take it or whatever. So the ideal world would be your picture, which is really alive and fully thought through and then for a visitor to be a part of it.

Frank: Exactly, you have to find a way to get there. I do of course not have the limitation of doing stuff that you can't really do in real life. When I make a scene of a burial ritual of the Funnel Beaker culture, then I can, through the magical Photoshop, have a hunebed covered with an earthen mound, or I can have like a huge bonfire burning for a Bronze Age cremation ritual that will have some fire hazard issues, probably when doing that real life in the park as a demonstration. Yeah, with the magical Photoshop I can make any gritty scene possible. So there are benefits to photography as well. I'm just picking the best of both worlds in a sense.

Matilda: I'm also curious, going in a slightly different direction now. Yvonne, you came from the background of sort of archaeological science and entered into the place that you are now, shall we say, from that route whereas Frank, you came from the profession of the visualisation aspect, so

sort of photography and visual media. Both of you now have a little experience of both, but in terms of the kind of pros or cons of coming from those two different directions, how do you think that has affected your path or the way that you approach this topic? Perhaps, Yvonne, you could start?

Yvonne: I don't really know, after all these years if I can really say that it's different. I started as an experimental archaeologist or as a re-enactor and then I did my studies and then I went back to re-enacting, visualisation. I have a husband who is in visualization. So I have a lot of input there as well. I don't think there's a real difference, but maybe Frank thinks otherwise, I don't know.

Frank: Yeah, I had to ponder on that one a little bit as well. I have of course a background in visual media because I did the photo academy, but before that I also studied history. My background in visualisation does make me think about setting up an image in a different way. When I, for instance, get a commission from a museum then a museum has for instance an educator, who's an archaeologist for instance, and that person will then inevitably have certain elements that they want to have in that scene, whereas it's then my job to communicate with that picture. So what kind of scene do you make? How do you stage that to actually communicate what you want to come across? That's probably something, Yvonne, that you're also are consciously thinking about through re-enacting?

Yvonne: Yeah.

Matilda: I'm just curious. It's never something that I have done personally and maybe some of our listeners are interested in potentially getting into that side of things. How much kind of actual acting do you have to do? Do you have to become a character? Are you more an educator? Are you kind of a guide or are you actually a person from that world?

Yvonne: Well, that depends. There's a lot of discussion about the actual definition. Actually, I'm not doing re-enacting. We are doing living history. So re-enacting is replicating a certain moment in time and that's involving a lot of acting, while living history is more like demonstrating what we know about the past in general, I think. That's a quick definition. A lot of people won't agree, I think. I actually hate acting. What I don't like is if I visit an open-air museum and somebody plays a role and he won't answer my question because he keeps saying, 'I don't know, I'm from the Stone Age'. Sometimes you just want an answer because you know it's a modern person that you're talking to. So we don't use that a lot, sometimes for a short while with children because then it's fun and they like that they are teased that way and for a split second even hesitate or think, okay, maybe she's really from the past. But even with children, your discussion will then end in something which is not nice. So no, in the museum, we don't use acting really, with the exception for shows in big events that tell a story and then we have actors, but then, you know, you go and watch a show for 25 minutes and you get a story. But just in the museum, in one of our houses, you won't really get actors, no.

Frank: For me, that's quite a bit different of course, because I make still images, so obviously there is acting involved. But basically my models only need to look the part and I don't want them to be posing in front of my camera because then you look at a person posing as a historic person, but rather than that, you do have to act it out so that it becomes a convincing scene. So the acting is even much more important than having knowledge on the subject matter. I mean, I will be the person directing the model...

Yvonne: And the dressing up of course is also part of acting. But in conversation we don't use characters or something. Only for the school children and then only to start off. Because I think it's important that you can answer questions also relating to their own world. I think 20 years ago or something, there was more kind of staying in your role involved in our educational programs, but you're losing the children. I had this wonderful colleague at Archeon. He was trying to explain changes in typology during the Bronze Age in bronze axes. And he had this class of high schoolers, VMBO in the Netherlands and they were on anything but not his story. And then he started talking about their phones and why they wanted to have a new one every half year or every year and that's typology! It was great. And he would never have reached that by staying in his role and going on and on and on about Bronze Age axes. Talking about their phones they really liked. And then he could... held up his axes and say, okay, it was the same thing 4,000 years ago! I think nowadays you won't even get them by staying in your role.

Matilda: If there was sort of one thing then that..., for other people who are trying to do visualisation of the past in some way, either through photos, through videos, through re-enactment, living history, any kind of thing, what would be your one piece of advice or the most important message that you think they should know about in order to be able to do something based on your experiences so far?

Frank: For making a good photograph, it's important to keep a few things in mind. I know that there are people who can wander around in open-air museums and be sort of the invisible kind of person that photographs the action. I'm quite the opposite, I cannot do that. I want my models to do exactly what I want them to act out, have my lights on it, the way I want it to be. So make conscious decisions, think about what is it that you want to communicate and what choices do you make. But also don't let people pose because then it is not a convincing image of the past. So don't be afraid to direct the person that you have in front of you to make that person act out what you want to actually show to make it a convincing image that the audience will also see it as an actual person from history, instead of just someone modelling for you.

Yvonne: I think for me it would be exaggerate what you want to tell about, what you want to show and try to hide as much as possible what you don't want to talk about. For instance, I'm still fighting against glasses that they are wearing, my volunteers, because as long as you're wearing glasses..., of course they know that you're a modern person, but they will talk about the glasses and you want to talk about something different. Glasses are sometimes hard to avoid, but there are a lot of things that you can avoid. And that's why I gave the example in the beginning of the face tattoos. If you don't know anything about it, but you do know about the axes that they're holding, the nets that they are using, the canoe that you are also displaying, then try to bring the canoe in the front, because that's what you know, and that's what you're going to talk about. I think that would be my advice. Try to lift up what you are sure of and try to avoid or hide or ignore what you don't know about.

Matilda: Yeah, I think that's great advice. And as we were talking about at the beginning of the episode, indeed, sometimes those decisions are difficult to make as to what you should focus on, but making intentional decisions, I like that. So, as a final question, just to round things off, do you have any exciting plans, events, things coming up in the future? And also, how do you think that the EXARC community or those listening in can help to make a difference in regards to all of the different points about visualisation that we've discussed today. Maybe Frank, you can start us off again?

Frank: Yeah, exciting stuff coming up for me. I'm broadening up my skillset a little bit. I have a few times now also decorated museums with landscapes that are correct to what the landscapes would've looked like in prehistory. So I will be doing that now also for a lovely museum on the

Neolithic and the Bronze Age in Germany, to give even more context to actually the world that people were living in, as opposed to only showing the people that lived in that age. That is very much fun. How can EXARC aid in that? EXARC is a great community with people from indeed very different disciplines and that is what makes it a great network. Opening up that discussion indeed on landscape and also the environment is a good subject matter to keep addressing because we, of course, now also live in a changing world, so it's a very relevant topic also for us today. Let's keep having that discussion.

Matilda: That's great, thank you. Yvonne, what about you?

Yvonne: We just opened our archaeoFactory, which is an interactive exhibition on the last innovations in archaeology and in that way explains how we go from artefact to visualisation. It's for older children and adults. It tells about everything from dendrochronology to thermoluminescence and using SEM (scanning electron microscopy) and all these kinds of things. We have three excavations that they can choose one from and then they can analyse the findings from that with microscopes, well, it's all of course pretend, but the thing we wanted to make them do is, okay, if you find some fields and you find some wheat in those fields, what does it mean as an archaeologist to find wheat? So it obviously means that you have found farmers and that they had bread. So we want to make them think about, how does it work? That if you find something, how can you make a story about your findings? So we do explain about simple archaeology. Okay, archaeology is digging up and why is it in the ground, et cetera. What we wanted to do was to make them think about the past and the way we can learn the past and how we can actually tell stories. It's about the topic we just discussed a lot and we started about three weeks ago, I think, and it's growing as a success. The reactions are very positive, also from adults who don't know a lot of this stuff, so they are very excited as well. It's making our museum more serious. It's not just a place for children to play. It's also a place to learn a lot about studying the past and creating stories about the past. And there's also a cabinet that we set up, where we ask people to show things that they want to keep and tell us the stories why they want to keep it. So there are first children's shoes, a knife that somebody got from his granddad, with a whole story around it and we want to change that every now and then. People can kind of lend us their object and tell us their story and share that with our visitors. That's very, very nice because it makes people think about, why we study the past, why we should keep onto the past and how we make actually the image of the past. I'm very excited about that!

Matilda: It just shows why we visualise things the way we do. So that's amazing, fantastic. Personally, I'm always very pro anything that shows people why we talk about the past the way we do, or indeed why we visualise things in that way. Both of those things sound incredible, looking more at past environments, looking at how we visualise things.

Yvonne: I'm very proud of it, so I want to show you all. How can you help? By visiting us! Actually I would really like to write a piece about it as well, because I think it's a new way of getting our story out there and it's nice.

Matilda: A beautiful way to round up the podcast, I think. So thank you very, very much Yvonne and Frank for joining us today and for sharing in your experience and your expertise. I definitely learned a lot. Hopefully our listeners also learned to think a little bit differently about how indeed they view the past. Thank you to everyone else for listening to this episode of #FinallyFriday by EXARC. If you would like to become more involved with EXARC - after all, we've got really cool projects coming on as you can hear - why not become a member? Alternatively, you can also help us more financially by making a small PayPal donation through the website to help support EXARC and its members such as Frank and Yvonne, in its endeavors.

Join us next month for another episode of #FinallyFriday and learn more all about the world of experimental archaeology, ancient technology, archaeological open-air museums and interpretation. Don't forget to follow the show through exarc.net and our associated social media channels. See you soon.