

# Newsroom

July 24, 2017

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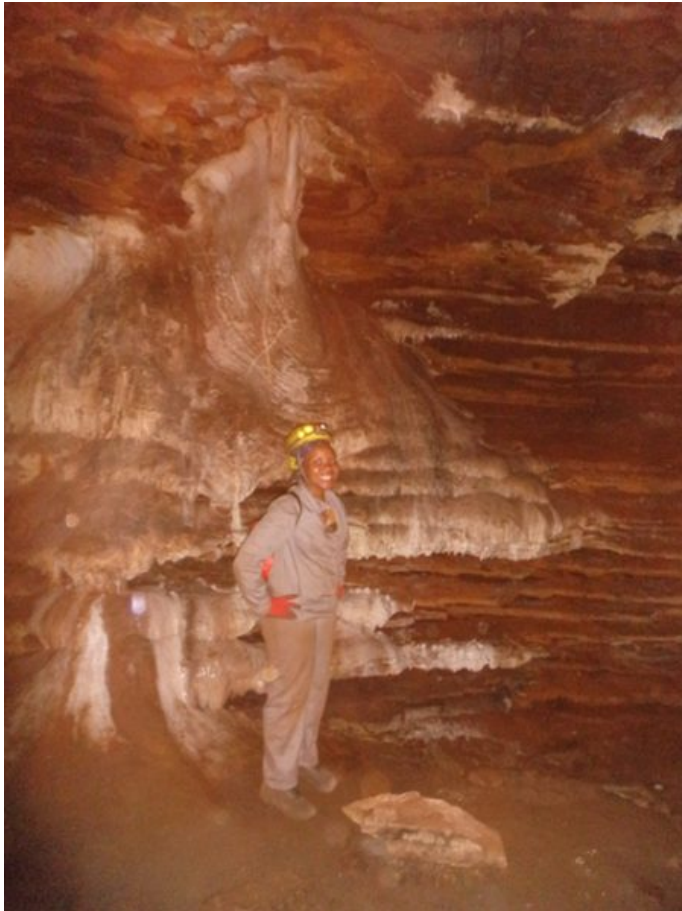
"Newsroom" (2017). *Newsroom*. 888.

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# Georgia Southern graduate student works with alumnus Lee Berger on recent 'Homo naledi' discoveries

JULY 24, 2017



*Nompumelelo Hlophe, graduate student at Georgia Southern, stands in a cave while exploring the Rising Star Cave system in Africa.*

Nompumelelo Hlophe, a graduate student in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Georgia Southern, co-authored a paper with University alumnus and scientist Lee Berger, Ph.D., D.Sc., ('89) about the latest information on *Homo naledi*, skeletal remains discovered by Berger in 2013.

Hlophe, who is pursuing a Master of Arts in social sciences, co-authored the article, "New Fossil Remains of *Homo naledi* from the Lesedi Chamber, South Africa," which was published in *eLife Journal*.

The article explains how Berger and other scientists have dated the bones found in 2013 at the Rising Star Cave System near Johannesburg, South Africa. They determined *Homo naledi* lived between 335,000 and 236,000 years ago in a similar time frame as our own descendants, *Homo sapiens*.

"Working with Dr. Berger is an opportunity that any scientist or anthropology major would be proud of, and I am honored to work with such an inspirational man," said Hlophe, who noted she began working with Berger as an exploration technician, or caver. "Dr. Berger is a busy man, but he always has time to check up on his team. I would not be where I am today if it was not for Dr. Berger. Through his wisdom and his teachings, I have learned to strive for success and make the knowledge of anthropology available to those who do not have knowledge of it."

These recent discoveries have gained the attention of several other major news outlets as well, including USA Today. The published research includes not only the age of the *Homo naledi* fossils, but also a new discovery of a second chamber in the Rising Star Cave system, containing additional specimens of *Homo naledi*.

These specimens include one of the most complete skeletons of a *hominin* ever discovered, as well as the remains of at least one child and another adult. Hlophe was one of the archaeologists who answered Berger's call to help explore the cave system.

"My first journey through the Rising Star Cave System is one I would never forget," she said. "My first trip was in November 2014. I remember before going in the cave, the leader was going over the rules, and I was scared, but at the same time I was so excited knowing that I would be going through a historical cave system.

"When in the cave, I was prepared for the worst, and since I am short, I was sure I was going to struggle," she continued. "After a six-hour trip through the cave (with breaks in between) I knew there that this was meant for me, and I was not turning back. Yes, I did gain a fair share of bruises and scratches, but they are scars I am very proud of."

This new data has a dramatic effect on what is known about human history.

"We can no longer assume that we know which species made which tools, or even assume that it was modern humans that were the innovators of some of these critical technological and behavioural breakthroughs in the archaeological record of Africa," says Berger. "If there is one other species out there that shared the world with modern humans in Africa, it is very likely there are others. We just need to find them."

This additional discovery has led the research team to argue that there is more support of the controversial idea that *Homo naledi* deliberately disposed of its deceased in these hard-to-reach caverns.

It also has led to more detailed information about the remains and that they have primitive features shared with some of the earliest known fossil members of species that lived nearly 2 million years ago. Additionally, the remains also share some features with modern humans.

Berger graduated from Georgia Southern in 1989 with a bachelor of arts in anthropology and holds a Ph.D. and D.Sc. in palaeo-anthropology from the University of Witwatersand in South Africa. He is currently a Research Professor in Human Evolution and the Public Understanding of Science at the University of Witwatersand as well as an Explorer in Residence at the National Geographic Society.



*Top: Nompumelelo Hlophe goes through a "squeeze," which leads to a bigger chamber at Gate Keeper Cave. Bottom: Nompumelelo Hlophe stands in Gate Keeper Cave. It is called Gate Keeper Cave because there is a big porcupine that stays by the entrance.*

# Free concussion screenings for athletes of all ages

**JULY 24, 2017**

Georgia Southern School of Health and Kinesiology faculty Nicholas Murray, Ph.D., assistant professor of kinesiology, and Barry Munkasy, Ph.D., associate professor of kinesiology, have teamed up with Statesboro-Bulloch County Parks and Recreation and Clark Medical Group to offer comprehensive concussion baseline and post-injury screenings to help injured athletes return to play in the safest and most effective manner.

The project is part of ongoing concussion research at the University, and is aimed to provide no-cost concussion screening to an at-risk group who may or may not have access to these types of screenings.

In the event a concussion has occurred, individuals will have the opportunity to complete a follow up assessment with project staff at Clark Medical Group or at Georgia Southern University's Hanner Biomechanics Lab. All information gathered will be shared with the individual's medical practitioner to aid in managing the athlete's recovery process.

The event is intended for adolescents, but concussion screenings will be open to the general public from 7-9 p.m. on July 25, Aug. 1-3 and Aug. 8-10, at Clark Medical Group in Statesboro. The walk-in appointments are on a first-come, first-served basis.

## **About Georgia Southern University's Concussion Research Lab**

Georgia Southern University, one of the leading institutions in the state for this type of research, offers a Concussion Research Lab which is dedicated to the scientific understanding of sports-related concussions and their resulting consequences. The research currently focuses on the longitudinal aspects and deficits involved in post-concussion injury. Known measurable deficits such as visual problems, postural instability, cognitive impairment, and debilitating neurologic symptoms, such as headaches, are direct results of a sport-related concussion and are not well understood during the recovery process.

The current research goal surrounding these deficits is to monitor the acute and long-term impairments athletes demonstrate post-injury. Dedicated to providing the highest level of care for their student-athletes, Georgia Southern offers pre-season baseline assessments that involve standard clinical exams and novel assessment techniques such as eye tracking, postural control, gait and neuropsychological tests. Pushing the envelope of science while bridging the gap between



clinical, engineering and human movement science is essential to understanding and mapping these long-term deficits.

The interdisciplinary research team, led by Murray and Munkasy, works closely with a diverse array of faculty and students at the Georgia Southern, and has collaborative relationships with the University of Delaware, University of Georgia, Georgia Tech, Georgia Tech Research Institute, University of Memphis, Shepherd Center, University of Prince Edwards Island, The University of Texas at El Paso, and the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill.

For more information, contact Murray at 912-478-0203 or [nmurray@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:nmurray@georgiasouthern.edu).



**GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY**  
COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES

**FREE comprehensive concussion baseline screening for athletes of all ages!**

- Come have your athlete get tested for concussions before they happen! In the unfortunate event that a concussion does occur during the time of play, this allows health professionals to help your child return to their favorite sport quicker and safer!

**Tests include:** Standard concussion protocol which includes assessments of cognition, balance, and vision

**Where: Clark Medical Group**

- 1550 Brampton Ave b, Statesboro, GA 30458

**When:**

- July 25<sup>th</sup>
- August 1<sup>st</sup>- August 3<sup>rd</sup>
- August 8<sup>th</sup>- August 10<sup>th</sup>

**Time: 7pm – 9pm**



**For more information please contact Dr. Nicholas Murray at [nmurray@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:nmurray@georgiasouthern.edu) - 912-478-0203 or Brian Székely at [bs07343@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:bs07343@georgiasouthern.edu)**

# Georgia Southern presents digital media artist Jeffrey Moser Aug. 14 – Sept. 15

JULY 24, 2017



The Georgia Southern University Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art presents work by digital media artist [Jeffrey Moser](#) Aug. 14 through Sept. 15 in the University Gallery at the Center for Art and Theatre.

The public is invited to learn more about Moser and his work during an Artist Talk on Aug. 31 at 5 p.m. in Arts Building, room 2071. A reception will follow at 6 p.m. at the Center for Art & Theatre.

Moser's exhibition "Transmedia PreDelay" incorporates film, new media techniques and digital objects to explore the aesthetic and expressive potentials operating at the intersection of database culture and lived experience.

Working with a variety of approaches to offset, duplicate and transform visual images, Moser renders moving pictures static and flat pixels into spatial forms, using the transmediation of audiovisual artifacts as both subject matter and medium.

"Digital and new media art faces an interesting challenge in that it lacks the specifically defined purpose of most other digital modes of experience in our culture, like advertising images, book

suggestion algorithms, and so on, but it also has to function as fine art while lacking most of the components we typically associate with 'fine art,'" said Georgia Southern Gallery Director Jason Hoelscher.

"I'm looking forward to showing Jeffrey Moser's Transmedia PreDelay exhibition here at Georgia Southern because his work is poised on a very fine line, looking forward into advanced applications of technology and immateriality, while also remaining grounded in ideas of expression and objecthood that have determined the path of art for so long," Hoelscher continued. "I've had sneak peeks at some of the works Jeffrey is putting together, and all I can say is this will be a must-see exhibition."

Moser received his Master of Fine Arts from the University of Delaware in 2010. He currently is a Teaching Assistant Professor of Interactive Media Design at West Virginia University. His video work has been included in ACRE TV, Co+Lab in Austin, Texas, and in an exhibition in Zagreb, Croatia, as part of the "I, Daughter of Kong" Research group. Other works have been screened at the National Gallery as part of the 32nd Black Maria Film Festival and a solo exhibition at the Phillips Museum at Franklin and Marshall College.

The College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS) is the largest of the eight colleges that make up Georgia Southern University, and it plays a central role in every student's core of knowledge. CLASS, also described as the University's College of the Creative Mind, prepares students to achieve academic excellence, develop their analytical skills, enhance their creativity and embrace their responsibilities as citizens of their communities, their nations and the world. CLASS offers more than 20 undergraduate degrees and several interdisciplinary minors from its 11 departments and five academic centers. CLASS offers eight master's degrees, two graduate certificates and one doctoral degree. For more information, visit [class.georgiasouthern.edu](http://class.georgiasouthern.edu).

*Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/Research University founded in 1906, offers 118 degree programs serving 20,673 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. Georgia Southern is recognized for its student-centered and hands-on approach to education. Visit [GeorgiaSouthern.edu](http://GeorgiaSouthern.edu).*