

# Proposal for Emoji HAND STENCIL

Related to the *STONE TOOL* proposal

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## Identification.

CLDR short name: hand stencil

CLDR keywords: hand | cave art | prehistory | art history | hand print

## Images.



**License.** I certify that the images have appropriate licenses for use by the UTC.

## Sort location.

- A. Category: *hand-fingers-open*.
  - B. After *raised hand*. Before *Vulcan salute*.
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## Selection Factors for Inclusion.



*Cueva de las Manos, Perito Moreno, Argentina, dated between 13,000–9,000 BP, stenciled. Image via Wikipedia.org.*

### **Compatibility.**

n/a

### **Expected usage level.**

Since hand stencil is a variation of the raised hand emoji, the expected usage level is quite high, albeit probably not always related to its original meaning as a significant contribution to cave art. The oldest type of cave paintings are hand stencils and simple geometric shapes. <sup>1</sup>

The hand stencil emoji is transnational, transcultural and extremely inclusive: hand stencils and their printed counterparts are being found in cave and rock art across the globe. They're a reminder of our common origins.

Primary users: science related (archaeologists, anthropologists).

Secondary users: art related (media historians, art historians).

Other: variation of raised hand.

As with *stone tool*, the historic and societal importance of this pictograph should come before usage levels.

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<sup>1</sup> See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cave\\_painting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cave_painting)

**Evidence of Frequency (I).**

Google search results for the term hand stencil	256.000.000
Bing search results for the term hand stencil	9.990.000
Google video search results	6.060.000

See screenshots and further evidence of frequency at the Evidence of Frequency (II) chapter at the bottom of this pdf.

Alternatively, below are search results for the term cave art, though hand stencil is not representing the whole body of cave art, which is according to an image search comparison, more associated with cave paintings of large animals, particularly bison, ibex, and horses.

Google search results for the term cave art	369.000.000
Bing search results for the term cave art	50.200.000
Google video search results	22.800.000

**Multiple usages.**

Hand stencils refer to stone age cave paintings, the origins of art, but also to the current practice of children to print or track their hands on a piece of paper. In other use, it could also simply function as an alternative to the waving hand. At the same time, the hand stencil emoji has a connotation of permanence: it's not set in stone, but *on* stone, and has survived for thousands of years.

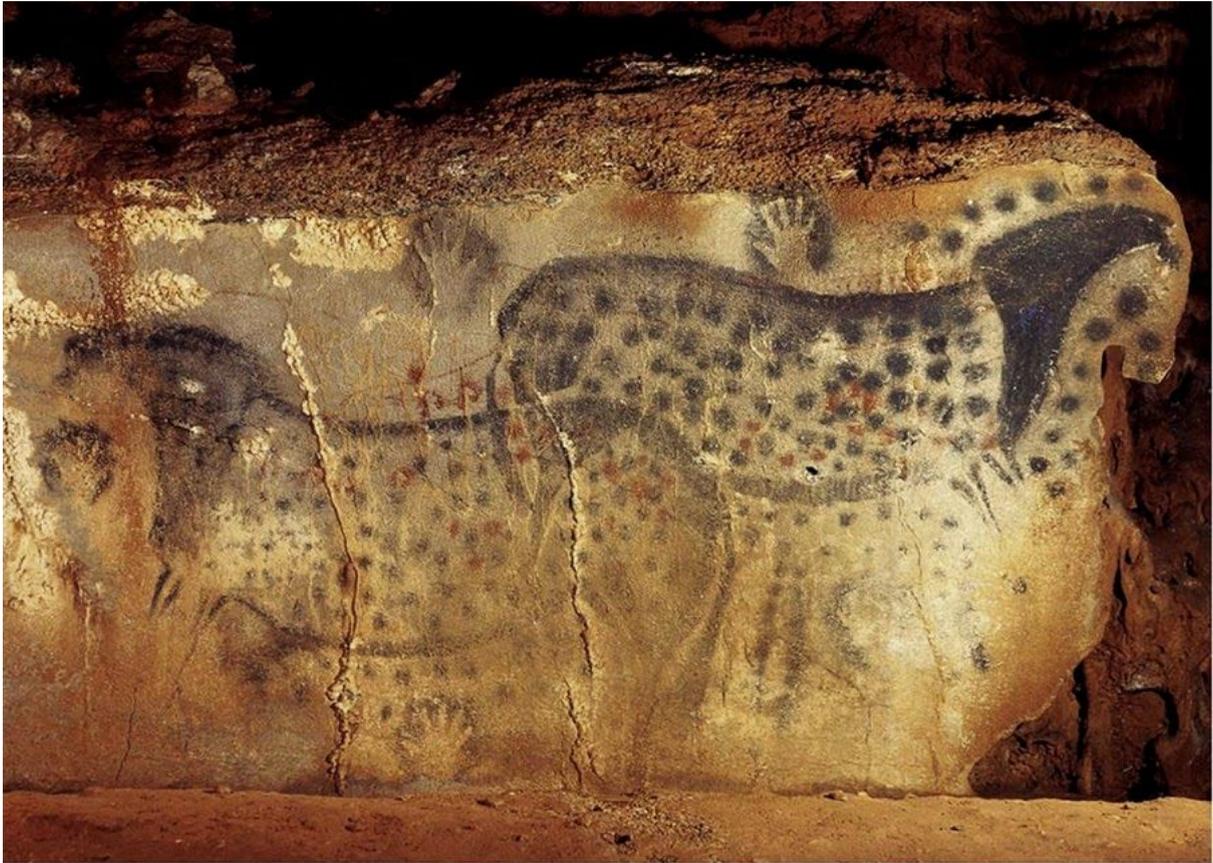
**Use in sequences.**

In history, hand stencils are never placed as a single image, but are always part of a community, or paired with another cave painting:



*The proposed hand stencil emoji as a scattered custom Photoshop brush.*





*Horses of Pech Merle, France, with hand stencils, over 29.000 years old.*

**Breaking new ground.**

The proposed pictograph is breaking new ground. Human prehistory is at this point quite underrepresented if not totally absent in emoji. See also my other proposal for **STONE TOOL**.

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**Distinctiveness.**

The hand stencil shape is based on the hand-fingers-open emoji. Even though it's immediately recognizable as an open hand, it's also very much a different pictograph due to its negative space. The hand itself is transparent, only the outline is visible, and easily recognizable as a 'spray painted' stencil.



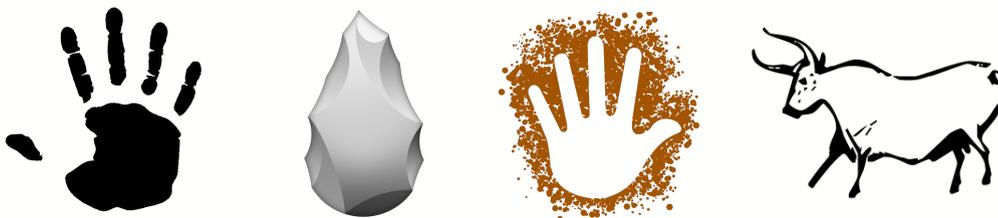


*Cave painting in Sulawesi, Indonesia, apprx. 40.000 years old.*

**Completeness.**

As stated below 'Breaking new ground', the proposed pictograph does fill in a gap in existing types of emoji. There are many variations of stone tools, but the use of the lanceolate shaped Acheulean example, as one of the more distinct primal forms of prehistoric tools, should more or less cover all types.

Images below for comparison:



Above: Hand print, stone tool proposal, hand stencil, cave painting of bison. <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Cave Painting Dingbats by Dixie's Delights on [Blogfonts.com](http://Blogfonts.com)

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## Selected factors for exclusion.

None.

*Note point J. Transient: the proposed emoji transcends any kind of past or future temporary fad.*

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## About this proposal.

### About the submitter.

I'm Alexandra Crouwers (NL, 1974), a visual artist and artistic doctoral researcher at Leuven University in Belgium. My work arises in the digital realm. Using a combination of 3D software, digital post production and photography, I make animations, (video-)installations, woven tapestries, and works on paper. I'm concerned with the origins of art within human evolution, and I'm investigating ways to make artistic contributions to the internet. Often my work connects to the genre of science-fiction, and encompass references towards ecological collapse and eschatology.

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### The hand stencil proposal.

Human history is evidenced by archaeological finds such as bone fragments, tools, and cave paintings that have survived millennia of decay or geological processes. The oldest known cave painting is supposed to be a red hand stencil in Maltravieso cave, Cáceres, Spain, dated to older than 64,000 years, and probably made by a *Neanderthal*.<sup>3</sup>

***The hand stencil is in fact the first ever pictograph!***

Hand stencils in Upper Palaeolithic cave art: A research project of the Department of Archaeology of Durham University:

*The human hand forms one of the most ancient themes of human art. Prehistoric examples of hand prints (positive images formed by covering the hand with paint and placing it on a surface, rather like modern children create) and stencils (negative images formed by placing the hand against a surface and blowing paint around it) are known*

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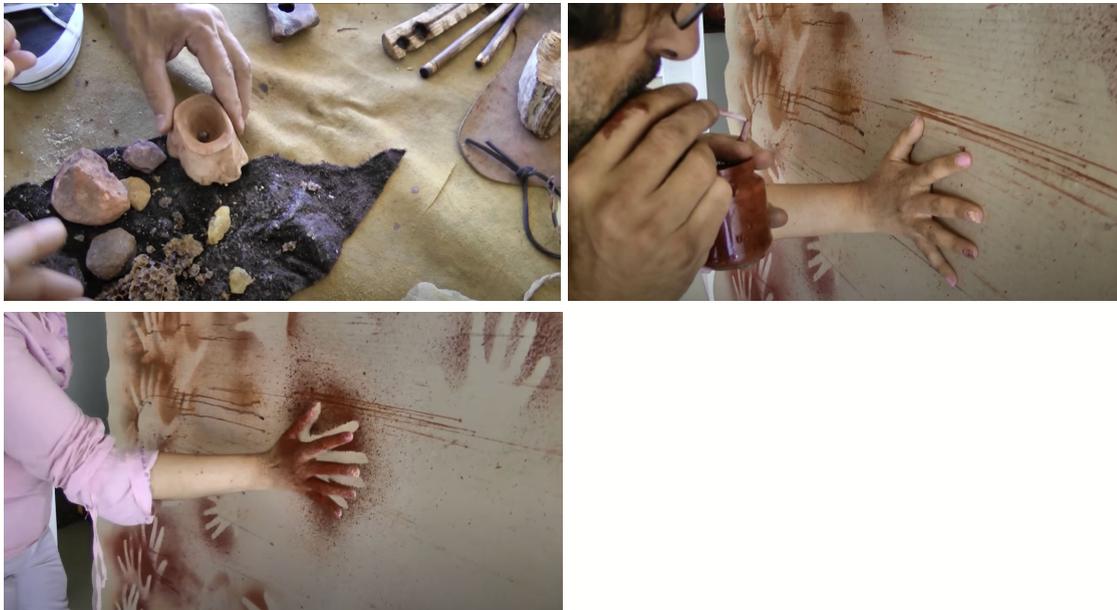
<sup>3</sup> See also (disputed, but nonetheless relevant): [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cave\\_of\\_Maltravieso](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cave_of_Maltravieso)

from prehistoric contexts in Latin America, the Sahara, Indonesia, Australia and Tasmania, in many cases dating back several thousand years.

For decades these have been thought to be Mid Upper Palaeolithic in age (around 22-29,000 14C BP) but recent dating and critical evaluation of existing data have shown that they are among the earliest examples of European Upper Palaeolithic cave art, stretching back at least to 35,000 (calendar) years ago. <sup>4</sup>

Negative stencils - far more common than prints - were created by projecting a fluid paint of either black colour (using the pigment manganese) or, more commonly, red (using haematite – ‘red ochre’) at the hand. Usually, stencils cluster in certain areas of deep caves – often areas difficult to access, or features of significance such as small ‘chimneys’ produced by geological erosion or curtains of stalactites.

On the latter, the stencils stand out against the sparkly white background, made more mysterious by the flickering light of the small animal fat lamps used by Palaeolithic artists to explore the deep caves.



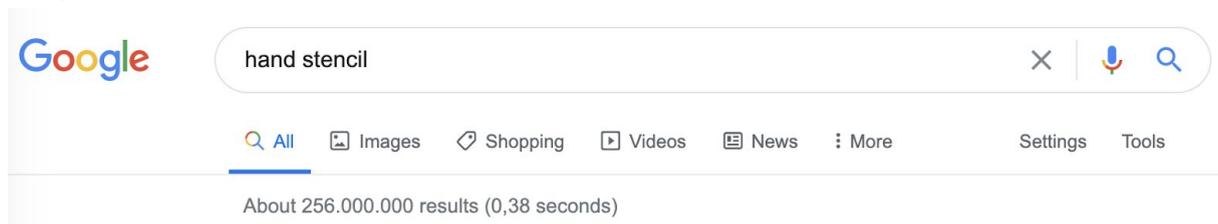
Above: prehistoric techniques used for hand stencil cave art. <sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.dur.ac.uk/archaeology/research/projects/all/?mode=project&id=640>

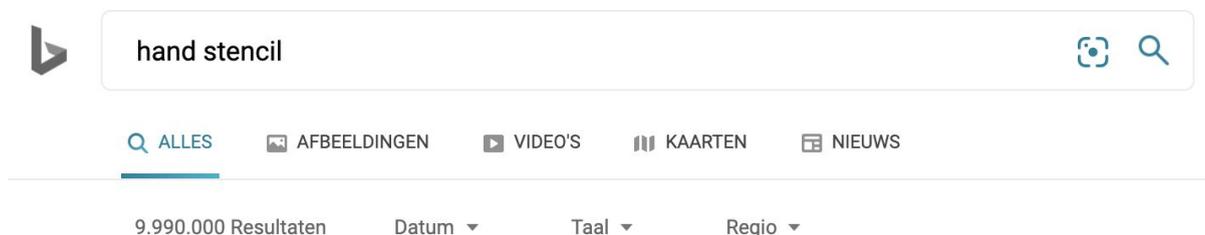
<sup>5</sup> Watch Handprint Pictograph Technique video at <https://youtu.be/4149uteH-FA>

## Evidence of Frequency (II).

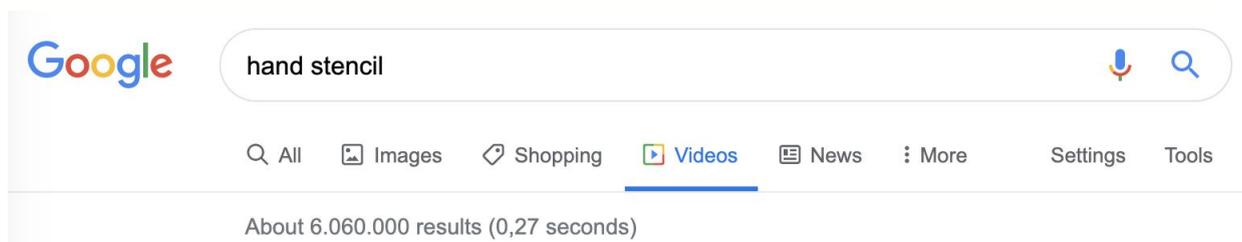
Google search for *hand stencil*: 256.000.000 results.



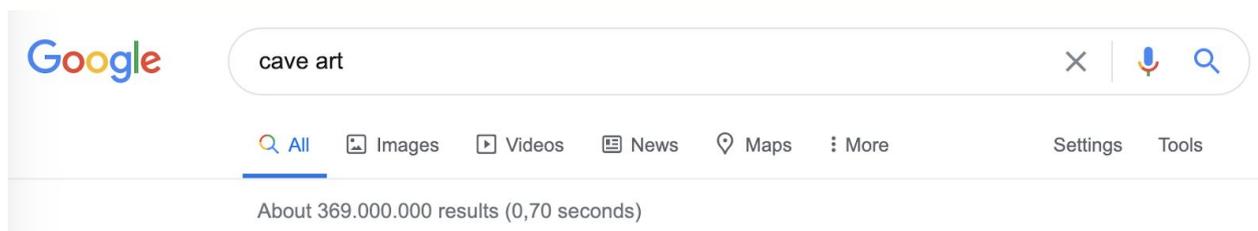
Bing search for *hand stencil*: 9.990.000 results.



Google video search for *hand stencil*: 6.060.000 results.



Related: Google search for *cave art*: 369.000.000 results.



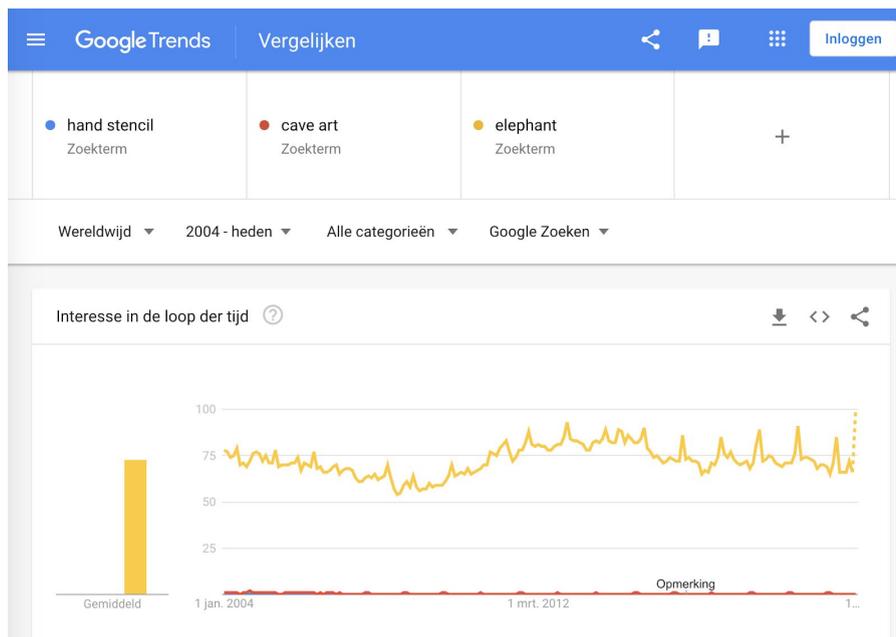
Google Trends: Web Search.

Note: the Google Trends page is in Dutch, but this doesn't affect the results. The search was done in incognito mode, using the parameters Global and the longest available period (2004 - now).

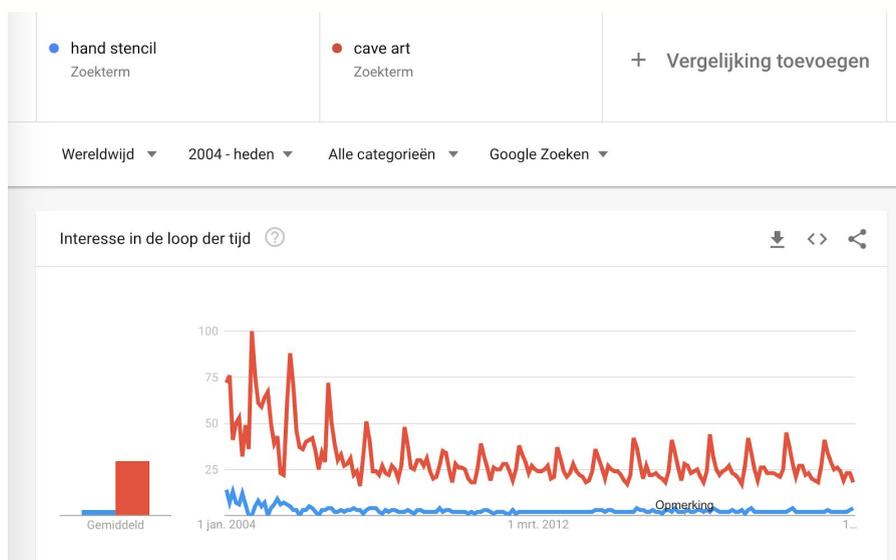
Elephant, hand stencil, cave art comparison.

Following the recommendation in the guidelines for this proposal, the results below show a comparison with the search term 'elephant', 'hand stencil', and 'cave art'.

There are much less results for both *hand stencil* and *cave art* than *elephant*. The images further down show a comparison between *hand stencil* and *cave art*. The results for *hand stencil* have been stable over the period of more than a decade. Interestingly - as with *prehistory* - each september, *cave art* shows a spike in web search results. This may very well be related to the start of a new school- or academic year.



Below: Comparison 'hand stencil' and 'cave art'.



Below: Google Trends: isolated general results, and Image Search results for *hand stencil*.

