


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At the Carnegie, Photographer Tanya Habjouqa Makes a Muslim Girl Seem Like Any Other Selfie Addict

THE DAILY PIC: An Arab woman photographs an Arab woman photographing.



Blake Gopnik (<https://news.artnet.com/about/blake-gopnik-86>) July 20, 2015

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An English literature student at the Islamic University in Gaza takes a break with fellow students. She is eager to apply her English skills and says that her dream is to travel the world. The siege on Gaza makes travel near impossible for the vast majority of Gazans.

THE DAILY PIC (#1355): This photo by [Tanya Habjouqa](http://www.artnet.com/artists/tanya-habjouqa/) (<http://www.artnet.com/artists/tanya-habjouqa/>) is in a show called “[She Who Tells a Story: Women Photographers from Iran and the Arab World](http://www.cmoa.org/ExhibitionDetail.aspx?id=24483)” (<http://www.cmoa.org/ExhibitionDetail.aspx?id=24483>), at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh. One thing I like about it is the way it normalizes a Muslim woman and removes any trace of the exotic from her. She’s just a normal girl who takes pleasure in a scarlet scarf and pink cell phone, the way her counterparts might all over the world.

And because she seems to be taking a selfie, there’s some sense that the girl stands for Habjouqa herself, as the female author of the photo. That is, the very existence of this image proves that Muslim woman can have – or could have, even in the face of repression – a wider range of roles than we in the West often imagine them having. (*Copyright Tanya Habjouqa*)

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7 Times Scientists Thought They'd Finally Cracked the Mystery of Stonehenge

The world-famous megalith in Wiltshire, England has puzzled experts for centuries. Even today, it presents more questions than answers.



Aerial view of Stonehenge in Wiltshire, the U.K. Photo: Shutterstock.

by Tim Brinkhof (<https://news.artnet.com/about/tim-brinkhof-39148>) May 7, 2025

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Stonehenge has been the subject of intense scholarly debate ever since early scientific minds began examining the ancient megalith in the early 17th century. Some, like architect Inigo Jones, [believed](https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/stonehenge/history-and-stories/history/research/) (<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/stonehenge/history-and-stories/history/research/>) the structure was erected by the Romans, known for their engineering prowess. Others, like antiquarian John Aubrey, claimed it was built by Druids: Celtic priests, teachers, and judges thought to have possessed magical powers.

Modern scientific inquiry suggests that Stonehenge is far older than Jones, Aubrey, or any of their contemporaries initially believed. But while we now have a rough idea of when the megalith was built—the first stones are thought to have been put into place around 3,100 B.C.E.—we still don't know why it was built.

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One possibility is that Stonehenge was conceived as a site for religious rituals, a hypothesis supported by the fact that its unique construction amplifies sounds and voices. Another theory holds that Stonehenge was built to unify the culture of its creators in an age of unprecedented migration and invasion. A third explanation proposes that the puzzling assortment of stones somehow helped ancient people keep track of the time and the stars. Each of the following revelations presents a piece of the puzzle.

[New Findings Complicate the Origins of Stonehenge's Megalith](https://news.artnet.com/art-world/stonehenge-megalith-scotland-2524973) (<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/stonehenge-megalith-scotland-2524973>)



Visitors watch the sunrise at Stonehenge, on June 21, 2024 in Wiltshire, England. (Photo by Finnbarr Webster/Getty Images)

Archaeologists had long presumed that the iconic stones that make up Stonehenge originated from Wales. However, a study published in *Nature* (<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-024-07652-1>) in August 2024 called this hypothesis into question. Comparing the chemical composition of one particular boulder—the so-called Altar Stone—to that of ancient rocks found throughout the British Isles, its authors learned that this particular building block may have actually come from northeastern Scotland: 466 miles away from Salisbury Plain.

Not so fast, a subsequent study argued (<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/stonehenge-altar-stone-not-from-orkney-2533524>). Research led by geologist Richard Bevins, published in the *Journal of Archaeological Science* in October 2024, countered the previous claim, putting the source of the Altar Stone in the Orcadian Basin, located in northeastern Scotland. The formation, some 400 miles north of Stonehenge, is a vast area. “However,” Bevins told Artnet News, “we have a chemical and mineral ‘fingerprint’ for the Altar Stone and we intend to utilize these characteristics to provide us with target areas to focus our attention on”

Have Experts Cracked the True Purpose of Stonehenge? (<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/stonehenge-unity-purpose-new-study-2593485>)



Cars make their way along the A303 past Stonehenge, Friday March 29, 2024. Photo: Andrew Matthews/PA Images via Getty Images.

A forthcoming paper in *International Archeology*, based on a year-long research project headed by University College of London archaeologist Michael Parker Pearson, suggests Stonehenge may have served not only an astronomical and a religious purpose, but also a political one.

Building off of aforementioned discoveries concerning the origins of the Altar Stone, he and his colleagues argue that the megalith's construction may have served to inspire kinship during a period of “increasing contact between the people of Britain and arrivals from Europe,” specifically from modern-day Netherlands and Germany.

Ironically, if Stonehenge was initially conceived as a response to these newcomers, the latter ended up embracing the megalith as a cornerstone of their own cultural identity.

Were Stonehenge's Builders Inspired by the Moon? (<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/stonehenge-moon-2474008>)



The full moon sets behind Stonehenge on April 27, 2021 in Amesbury, England. Photo by Finnbar Webster/Getty Images.

Researchers have long suspected that Stonehenge's construction aligns with the movement of the sun, with the Heel Stone framing its rise during the summer solstice and its descent during the winter solstice. But what about the moon?

While ordinary lunar cycles don't appear to correspond with Stonehenge's positioning in any meaningful way, experts have yet to observe the megalith during a lunar standstill—the period in which the points where the moon appears and sets are farthest apart on the horizon.

Lunar standstills happen once every 18.6 years, with the latest set to occur during the first half 2025. As such, researchers from Oxford, Leicester, and Bournemouth universities, as well as the English Heritage and Royal Astronomical Society, are keeping a close on the megalith, eager to put this longstanding theory to the test.

Archaeologists May Have Finally Solved the Mystery of Where Stonehenge's Rocks Came From
(<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/antiquity/article/megalith-quarries-for-stonehenges-bluestones/AAF715CC586231FFFCC18ACB871C9F5E>)

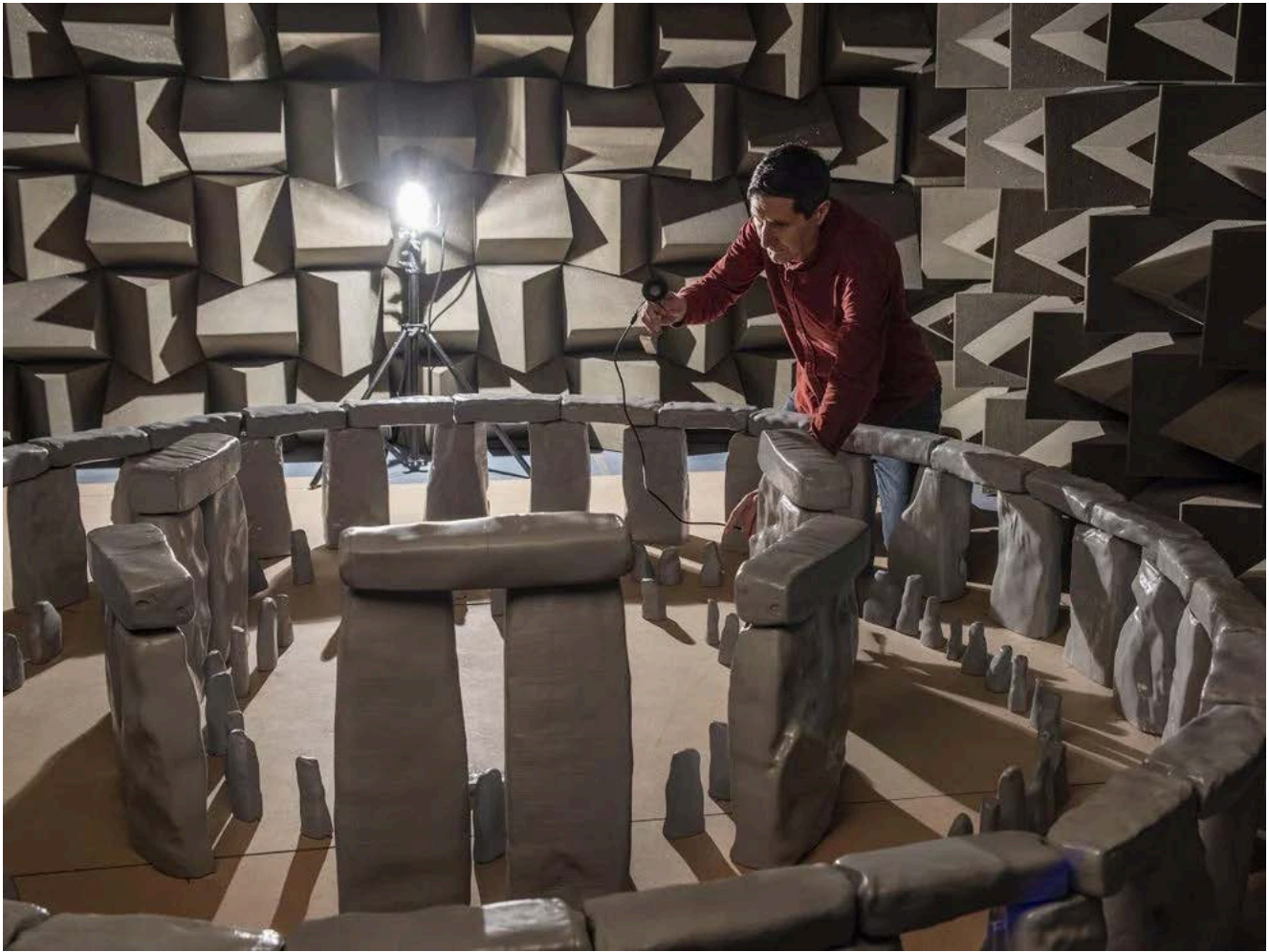


Conservator James Preston uses a pointing spoon atop scaffold erected inside the stone circle at Stonehenge. Photo: Ben Birchall/PA Images via Getty Images.

Although researchers had long suspected that the spotted “bluestones” that make up Stonehenge’s inner circle were originally mined near the Preseli Hills in Wales, no one was able to locate the precise quarry—until now. A peer-reviewed study published in the journal *Antiquity* in February 2019 identified two possible sites: Carn Goedog and Craig Rhos-y-felin, both located more than 150 miles away from Salisbury Plain.

“What’s really exciting about these discoveries is that they take us a step closer to unlocking Stonehenge’s greatest mystery,” the study’s lead author, Mike Parker Pearson, told the *Guardian* following the study’s publication. The distance between the quarries and Stonehenge itself is significant: “Every other Neolithic monument in Europe was built of megaliths brought from no more than 10 miles away.”

A Remarkable New Study Suggests That Stonehenge Was Built to Amplify Sound During Ancient Ruling-Class Rituals
(<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/stonehenge-acoustics-1905935>).

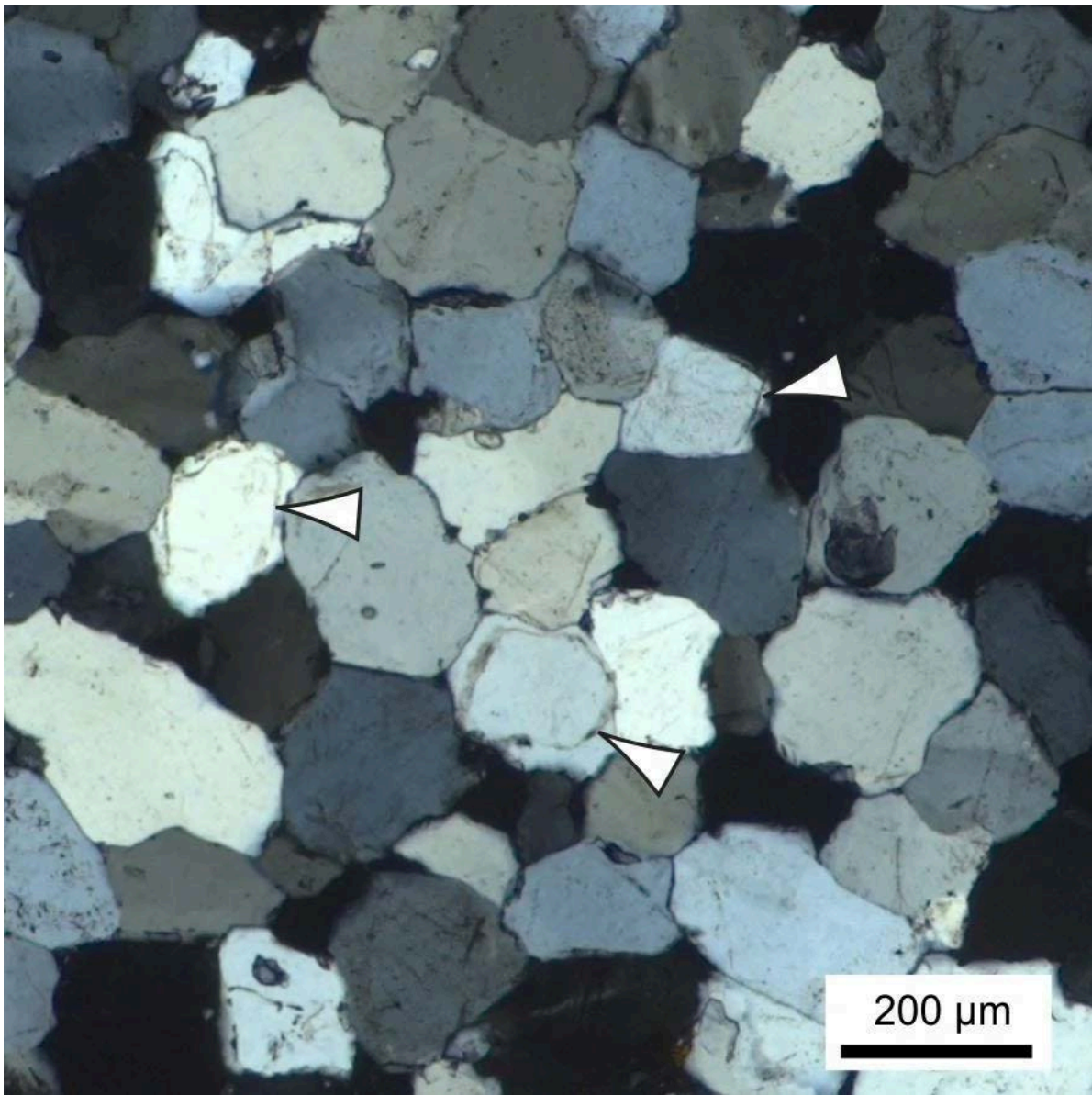


Acoustical engineer Trevor Cox works with a scale model of Stonehenge in a sound chamber at the University of Salford, Manchester. Photo courtesy of the Acoustics Research Centre/University of Salford, Manchester.

Every few years, researchers approach the mystery of Stonehenge from a different perspective. In 2020, acoustics engineers from the University of Salford in Manchester created a scale model of the megalith based on laser scans from the governmental research group Historic England.

The sonic experiment, published in the scientific *Journal of Archaeological Science* (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305440320301394>), revealed that the stones acted as both an amplifier *and* a dampener. In other words, while people standing inside the megalith's inner circle would have been able to hear each other loud and clear, those outside the circle wouldn't have been able to hear a thing. This, the researchers concluded, lends credibility to the long-established hypothesis that Stonehenge hosted secretive religious rituals.

Scientists Have Conducted Tests That Reveal Stonehenge Is Made From a Nearly Indestructible Ancient Material
(<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/stonehenge-secret-sandstone-quartz-crystal-1998477>)



A microscope image of the sample from Stonehenge's Stone 58 shows a tightly interlocking mosaic of quartz crystals. The outlines of quartz sand grains are indicated by arrows. Photo courtesy of the Trustees of the Natural History Museum.

In 2021, a team of researchers from the University of Brighton, the British Geological Survey, English Heritage, and the Natural History Museum in London performed highly destructive yet revealing microscopic analyses of samples of Stonehenge's boulders extracted during a conservation project in the late 1950s.

The analyses, published in a 2021 issue of the scientific journal *Plos One*, found that Stonehenge's stones are made from 99.7 quartz crystals, explaining why the 5,000-year-old megalith has managed to stand the test of time with minimal decay. The samples originally belonged to Robert Phillips, a diamond cutter who worked on the conservation project, who held them in his possession for more than 60 years.

Researchers Say They've Discovered Stonehenge's Real Purpose: To Serve as a Solar Calendar (It Even Factored in Leap Days!)
(<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/stonehenge-solstice-calendar-2080892>)



Stonehenge. Photo courtesy of English Heritage.

One of the oldest prevailing theories about Stonehenge is that the ancient megalith functioned as some kind time-keeping device. How this giant, stone watch worked, though, has been the subject of debate.

A 2022 study published in the scientific journal *Antiquity* proposes that Stonehenge's structure keeps track of the 365.25-day solar year, with one group of stones marking 30-day months, another group separating weeks, and four additional stones—known to archeologists as the Station Stones—accounting for leap days.

“Materializing a time-reckoning system in the structure and form of a major monument, with all the effort implied in doing so,” the study’s author, Bournemouth University professor Timothy Darvill, explained, “should come as no surprise, for it is a common practice amongst non-literate and semi-literate societies.”

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