On the rugged southern Cape coast near Still Bay, palaeontologists have found a rich repository of ancient human prehistory, with artefacts dating to more than 100,000 years ago.

The discovery by Helm, De Vynck and Helm's colleague Dr Jan De Vynck, left, is the oldest example ever found of a triangle etched in sand, and more than 100,000 years old. The triangle is approximately 80mm long and the circle is 81.5mm in diameter. The circle is drawn in cemented rock, which has been preserved for millennia because the sand had been replaced by mineral deposits. The untrained eye would either not notice the circle or mistake it for natural features. The findings are the result of a multidisciplinary approach that included ethnoarchaeological and palaeoecological work, as well as artifactual analysis.

The discovery is significant because it challenges the idea that modern humans did not develop geometric concepts until after 40,000 years ago, which is when the earliest evidence of geometric art is found in Europe. The discovery suggests that early modern humans had a cognitive capacity for pattern recognition and abstraction, which they may have used for communication, hunting, and other activities.

The team's findings support the theory that early modern humans had a cognitive capacity for symmetry and patterns, which they may have used for communication, hunting, and other activities. The research was funded by the National Geographic Society and the National Science Foundation.