

Homo Aestheticus: Testing Evolutionary Aesthetic Hypotheses in Four Tribal Populations

The work of authors such as Dutton (“*The Art Instinct*,” 2009), Dissanayake (“*Homo Aestheticus: Where Art Comes From and Why*,” 1995), Davies (“*The Artful Species: Aesthetics, Art, and Evolution*,” 2012) and the Polish philosopher Luty (“*Sztuka jako adaptacja / Art as an adaptation*,” 2018) have led to heated discussion among scholars who are interested in aesthetics and art. Two opposite sides have emerged that are either in favor of or in total opposition to the ideas presented by the aforementioned authors. In these four books, the authors constructed many interesting and intellectually intriguing hypotheses and ideas that allow us to unite the phenomenon of art with evolutionary theory (Dutton, 2009; Dissanayake, 1995; Davies, 2012; Luty, 2018). Simply put, these works attempt to explain the human tendency to create and admire art based on the biological theories of natural and sexual selection.

However, most of these hypotheses have little or anecdotal coverage in empirical data. Thus, we propose a scientific project that aims to test the most important hypotheses in the field of evolutionary aesthetics, and investigate whether the increase in the popularity of the evolutionary approach to aesthetics is empirically justified. In other words, do the facts support or refute such ideas? The present project aims to verify empirically whether such an evolutionary type of analysis is justified in the case of aesthetics.

In the present project, we would like to test whether there are intercultural aesthetic universals in four traditional populations (Papua, Yali tribe; Africa; Siberia; the Cook Islands). We will conduct three stages of the project. **The first stage** will focus on investigating intercultural universality of art perception. **The second stage** will include testing three models regarding the role of artistic abilities in reproductive success. **The third stage** will consist of experimental evaluation of a hypothesis that joint artistic performance leads to increased group cohesion.

The project uses tools (methods) of social and biological sciences to answer questions posed in philosophical and aesthetic literature. The results of this project will be published as a monography, and presented at philosophical conferences. We believe that using biological theories and testing certain facts through research experiments may be very useful to the contemporary philosophy of art.