

What is the relationship we as human beings have with art and creativity?

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Introduction

After years of perusing art within an educational environment I have come to the realisation that the phenomena of artistic creativity is a curious yet powerful one, whilst not offering directly towards the survival or procreation of oneself, it has shaped the way we as humans operate and live. Whilst some individuals are far more creative and artistic than others, we all strive for self-expression to some extent, and what is art if not self-expression? Artistry has permeated into our everyday lives, to an extent our very culture revolves around the creations of artists, films, music, fashion etc. Yet I feel we never question why, why does or species place such value on a behaviour that doesn't intrinsically lend itself to our survival? When did this fascination with artistry begin and why? This Independent inquiry is an attempt to illuminate such ambiguous questions by the exploration of topics such as the origin of man's relationship with art and the reasons for its birth, this will be done throughout the first and second chapter. It will entail researching prehistoric art and questioning the theories that surround it, such as Abbe Henri Breuil's "hunter magic hypothesis". Within chapter 3 I will explore the assumption that artistic creativity is an exclusively human trait, and whether there is proof to negate such a belief. However due the length restrictions assigned to such an inquiry I fear I will not be able to include research into the possible health/psychological benefits of art, although this may prove for a sensible continuation point if I should choose to maintain this avenue of study. Ultimately, I hope to shed light on humanities perpetual fascination with creativity, as means to greater understand myself and my fellow art students.

Chapter 1

Whilst gathering adequate research material for this inquiry, more specifically pieces regarding human motivation, ultimately to find an article or piece about creativity, I happened upon “Maslow’s hierarchy”. “Maslow’s hierarchy” refers to a psychological theory that aims to explain basic human motivation, and therefore explain humanities overall development. This theory was first offered by a psychologist called Abraham Maslow, in 1943 he wrote a paper “A Theory of Human Motivation” (Maslow, 2017) that detailed the typical pattern of human motivation, from simple basic needs such



Fig. 1 Maslow’s hierarchy of needs

Maslow's hierarchy of needs

as safety to what he describes as the pinnacle of human existence “self-actualisation”. The pyramid of needs can be seen on the diagram. What was ultimately unclear was Maslow’s stance on creativity, it does not feature within the hierarchy at all, which is odd as there are some individuals that devote their whole lives to chasing creative pursuits. Upon more in depth research I found that Maslow does in fact tackle the phenomena of creativity and explains that creativity is a characteristic that is often seen in “self-actualised” individuals, meaning that they have satisfied all previous needs seen on the hierarchy. Maslow promotes that creativity is a human virtue that can be nurtured and actualised through the fulfilment

of base needs, when the base needs are met, we are able to cultivate our creativity. I found this hypothesis especially poignant when attributed to the occurrences of prehistoric art, for if Maslow is correct the occurrence of prehistoric art is an indicator of early man's emerging success.

With Maslow's theory in mind I felt a sensible progression would be to examine the beginning of our relationship with art. The Aurignacian period, which starts around 40,000 BC is where a vast bulk of the early artistic archaeological finds are made. This time period really marks the revelation of early pictorial and sculptural art. The earliest known records of pictorial "art" came in the form of primitive yet poignant cave paintings such as ones found in the well-known Sulawesi Cave, located in the south of Sulawesi, Indonesia. These paintings are believed to of dated back to at least 37,000 BC. This archaeological find was particularly important not only because of its age but also because of its location. Up until its discovery much of the primitive art found seemed to revolve around Europe, however this Sulawesi cave discovery signified how widespread our early humanity spanned. Upon the walls of the Sulawesi cave there are multiple stencils of hands and a crude yet clear painting



Fig. 2: Sulawesi Cave Art (37,900 BC)

of what is believed to be a babirusa or “pig deer”. These rudimentary hand stencils were made by the artist blowing dye over their hands straight onto the cave wall, what’s particularly interesting about these hand stencils is that they have been found in abundance, spanning multiple archaeological sites and time periods, such as La Cueva de las Manos, or “Cave of Hands, located in Argentina. The art on the walls of



Fig. 3: Cueva de las Manos, or “Cave of Hands

this cave system date back to 5,000 BC. Two completely different time periods, in two very distant locations yet the prevalence of the hand stencils in both are clear, in fact a staggering 43 French and Spanish caves have been discovered to contain primitive hand stencils and prints. Thus, raising the question, what did early man see in our hands, and why were we so fixated on them? (Everett, 2017) suggests a surprising motive behind these hand motifs.

Given the prominence of the hands in the linguistic representation of numbers (...) and given the clearly numerical function of other ancient artefacts, such as the Ishango bone, it is not implausible that some of these artistic representations of hands also served basic quantitate functions.

He proposes that these hand stencils were not done out of a kind of symbolic convenience, but in fact served as a kind of early numerical function. He then goes on to explain his hypothesis, he uses the existence of the “ishango bone” (a

Palaeolithic artefact that some believed to be used as a tally tool) as an indicator that man was developing the foundations of early mathematics as far back as 18,000 BC (when the ishango bone was believed to originate from). Now one could propose that if early man was already beginning to grasp the idea of the numerical system then this could create an entirely different context for the hand stencils existence. Prof. Everett clarifies that this fixation on one's hands is seen in infants and this manual fixation corresponds directly with the children's gradual digestion of the numerical systems, so it is not unreasonable to suggest that this same form of cognitive development was happening with our early man, and these hand prints were aiding them in this. Whilst this hypothesis is a compelling, the likelihood is that no concrete evidence will emerge to confirm such a theory, yet possible conclusions are better than none at all.

Due to the nature of these artistic pieces, all experts can really do is hypothesize based mainly upon what we already know about ourselves and our tendency to ritualise. It is widely believed that the early cave art held a deeper purpose than just mere aesthetics and served a deeper and possibly spiritual purpose for early man. (Rydzewski, 1967) poignantly states "The roots of art lie in the practical side of religion, which created a need for images representing gods, spirits or other beings to serve as a focus for ritual or worship." Just as Everett believed that the primitive hand prints helped aid early man's fundamental advances in their understanding of numbers, Rydzewski believes early art played a major role in primitive man's contemplation and understanding of their surroundings, which in their case and ours, includes the construction and ideology of deities and rituals. It is known that hunting was of utmost importance when it came to the survival of early man. Many today

speculate that the abundance of animal imagery in cave art is a sign that our ancestors were trying to positively influence their prospects when hunting. The idea that cave art held this ritualistic importance was founded by the French archaeologist and priest, Abbe Henri Breuil. Breuil is one of, if not the most influential figures when looking at the interpretation of cave art. Up until his death in 1961 Breuil held a dominant position in the field of cave art interpretation, (Breuil, 1979) argued that ancient cave paintings found by archaeologists were not mere examples of art for art sake, but archaic attempts of assuring survival through means of ritualistic magic, this is now referred to as the “hunting magic” theory. Breuil came to this conclusion by studying primitive tribes of his time such as the aboriginal Arunta people of central Australia. Breuil observed the Arunta people and their ritualistic ceremonies. He saw that they would paint animals on cave walls to ensure success when hunting and in an effort increase the prosperity of their game animals. (James, 2002) draws similar parallels between today's tribal behaviour and that of prehistoric man to validate these speculations. (James, 2002) “Although the beauty of cave art is undeniable, other scholars point to so called “hunting magic” as an explanation for animal themes in cave art, as numerous ethnographic parallels can be cited among present-day indigenous peoples who use animal drawing in connection with their hunting rituals.” James then explains “Though practises in more recent times may be substantially different from Palaeolithic practises, descriptions of the Ituri pygmies in central Africa indicate the cultic use of pictorial images as an important part of hunting activities.” He goes on to explain the Ituri's ritual, essentially the animal is drawn and that illustration is then stuck by an arrow or spear, the huntsman then leaves the cave and uses that same weapon to kill the depicted animal, once the hunter returns with the kill, he then rubs the blood and fur of the dead beast on the illustration thus

bringing the ritual full circle, marking its completion. (James, 2002) notes that “here art links religious ritual and practical technology in the activity of a tribal hunt”. This observation made by James substantiates Rydzewski’s directly, both acknowledging the partnership between primitive art and religion. Now we aren’t sure if the cave art found thousands of years ago actually served a similar purpose to the aboriginal people of today like those observed by experts such as Van James and Abbe Henri Breuil.

The assumption that the cave art of aboriginal man and prehistoric man shared a common motive is not a ridiculous one, however there are those who criticize this “hunting magic” theory. One counter argument to Breuil’s “hunter magic” hypothesis was that by judging from the bones found deep within these prehistoric caves, the animals often depicted on the walls were in fact very rarely featured in early man’s diet, and furthermore many species portrayed on cave walls were nonsensical for early man to hunt, due to the obvious dangers associated with them, for example large felines, rhinoceros and bears. However, Breuil anticipated this criticism when writing his book “400 years of cave art”. (Breuil, 1979) reasoned that the use of “hunting magic” would most likely of been used on sparsely populated game, due to the difficulty affiliated with hunting such animals. He also acknowledges that within the caves there were many paintings of creatures that did not feature in early man’s diet, those that were depicted were often dangerous and predatory animals. Breuil explains this, stating the depictions of dangerous animals were most likely the hunting communities attempt at gaining magical influence over these beasts, as to avoid harm from them. A second, glaringly apparent criticism is often made regarding Breuil’s “hunting magic” hypothesis. This criticism attacks the validity of

Breuil's ethnographic case studies, it questions the apparent correlation between aboriginal tribes and Palaeolithic man, the very basis on which Breuil constructed his hypothesis. One could argue that yes, tribes like the aboriginal Arunta may resemble Palaeolithic man in terms of their hunting strategies, for example (James, 2002) states that both hunted with primitive stone age spears and crude projectile based weaponry. However, this does not automatically mean that the Arunta people share the same rituals and beliefs. Why should we suggest the Arunta cave art holds the same symbolism and meaning as early man, especially when you consider that the Arunta people have outlasted their Palaeolithic counterparts by thousands of years, surely it is sensible to suggest that their rituals and customs have evolved and diverged significantly over time. Breuil and his cohorts had no response to this line of criticism, this did not stop his hypothesis filtering down into the beliefs of many rock art specialists today such as David Lewis- Williams that continues to approach ancient cave art from a shamanic perspective.

When observing cave art, it is true that there is a clear fixation on what could be called “power animals” or animals they thought to be formidable, for example the

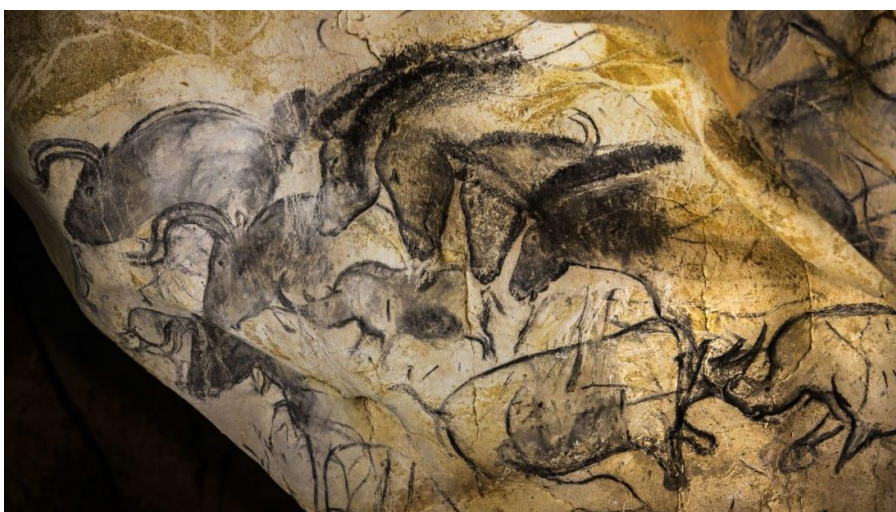


Fig. 4: paintings of animal figures on the rock walls of the Chauvet Cave

depiction seen in the French Chauvet cave. The Chauvet cave art dates back around

36,000 years ago, making it one of the oldest known figurative art pieces. Within the cave there are various unmistakable depiction of prehistoric animals. What's interesting is there are 14 separate animal species represented within the cave, 4 of which make up 65% of all the animal depictions and furthermore these 4 were arguably the most daunting animals that coexisted with our ancestors at the time. Figures of Mammoths, cave lions, cave bears and woolly rhinoceros are littered throughout the cave, showing an obvious fascination. However, the illustrations of these species along with many others are not just depicting figurative representations, but also scenes portraying their behaviour in the wild, such as the two woolly rhinoceroses clashing together (seen in the image above) or pride of Lions in the act of hunting a group of bison. This apparent concentration on these four powerful creatures could signify several different things. Their repeated portrayal could be interpreted as admiration and appreciation, paying homage to these majestic and powerful animals. perhaps they could be depicted as an attempt to warn others of their power, and the potential dangers surrounding such species, meaning the cave art adopts an educational role for the other cave dwellers that may not have come into contact with these creatures. However, Breuils "hunter magic" theory would argue that this fixation on such animals would be due to the danger surrounding them, and the depictions were involved in ancient rituals, as a means to gain some kind of dominion over the beasts. However, one could contend with this idea and question the inclusion of scene portrayal within the cave art. What purpose did these depictions perform, surely the scenes could have been an effort to capture the behaviour of such animals, possibly a distant precursor to the naturalist artists of today. According to the "hunter magic" hypothesis an animal depictions sole purpose was to act as a kind of link or effigy to that corresponding animal, in a way similar to

the” voodoo dolls” shown in today’s popular culture. So, one must ask the question, what benefit to the ritual would creating a dynamic scene be?

Through research, one can only deduce that the phenomena of cave art is a beautiful yet frustratingly mysterious one. Due to the global and chronological spread of archaeological finds, it is hard to come to a realistic conclusion that would fully encompass all instances, for example, one theory that could make a very compelling argument as to explain the humanoid depictions found in such caves like Bhimbteka (central India) may not be convincingly applicable to say, hand stencils found in caves such as Sulawesi. Consequently, there is a very valid school of thought that suggests the only effective way to conceptualise cave art is situationally. The reality of cave arts complexity is concluded in “The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology and Anthropology of Rock Art”. Explaining that cave art did not have just one single motive or agenda but aided early man in a plethora of different ways, and almost certainly played a role in our progression and construction of what we know as “culture” today. (David and McNiven, 2017)

Rock art is a living performative manifestation linking multiple actants representing numerous inscribed and incorporated memories of individuals and communities. As actants with agency, rock art and its landscapes can call upon humans to act in certain ways. In doing so, they can promote or elicit memories, increase the specificity of recollections, or spark one’s curiosity to learn more (sensu Mayes 2013).

Chapter 2

Upon investigation there is far more to prehistoric art than just cave paintings, clear instances of rudimentary sculptures were found as far back 38,000 BC. Interestingly there are far older archaeological finds of suspected rock sculptures, however controversy surrounds the origins of such objects due to their indistinct appearance, for example Venus of Tan-Tan believed to originated from between 200,000–500,000 BC, subsequently making it the oldest known human depiction. However,



Fig. 5: Venus of Tan-Tan (replica)

many experts argue that it is just a curiously eroded rock, that bears no clear signs of intentional modification. Much like today the female form appeared to be a focal point for the ancient artists, this is evident by the abundance of sculptures aptly named “Venus” figures. These figures originated mostly from Europe and are synonymous with the Palaeolithic period (40,000- 8,000 BC). As many as 200 examples of these female figures have been unearthed in a plethora of different archaeological sites, they have been found in caves and open-air sights alike, they have also been found within a crude burial context. The extraordinary thing about these Venus figures is how similar they all are, one must consider that not only were they found scattered throughout Europe but also thousands of years often separated their origin, however

every single instance is unmistakable due to their portrayal of female form. Whilst they differ in size and base material, they all portray an exaggerated female model, placing emphasis on the curvaceous nature of women often portraying large bottoms, breast, thighs and abdomen. Curiously enough the depiction of the head and feet are often neglected, showing focus on the female figure itself. Palaeolithic man's motives behind the creation of such figures, much like the cave art of the same period is relatively uncertain, one can only observe and hypothesise, a particularly compelling theory is that much like Breuil's "hunter magic" hypothesis, these figurines were used in ancient rituals, in an effort to elicit fertility through magical means. These statuettes could very well of been a fertility effigy. Again, referring to the basic principles of Breuil's "hunter magic" hypothesis, birth and pregnancy was fraught with potential dangers before the development of modern medicine, especially in an environment as potentially hostile as the one Palaeolithic man endured. therefor the idea that early man would resort to rituals to positively



Fig. 6: Venus of Willendorf

influence such a thing is practical to assume, and furthermore the fact that many of these Venus figures where created with enlarged abdomens undoubtedly played a

large role in many experts arriving to this conclusion. However, there may be a school of thought that diverges from this and suggests that the role these figurines played were simply to portray the natural female form of the time, a portrait of the female sex, or idealistic representation of that era's perception of beauty, to put it plainly, a Palaeolithic equivalent of today's "Pinup". This theory of the Venus figurines' apparent sexual connotation could be reinforced by the genital exaggeration many figures possess, adversely this could also be explained by the Venus figure fertility association. However one could dispute this particular "contemporary beauty" theory due to the fact that Palaeolithic man's living conditions and scarce diet would not typically allow for the opulent curves often seen depicted in the statuettes, the supposed reality would have been a much leaner, slimmer alternative if one observes modern aboriginals as a rough indicator. In Sarah M. Nelson's text "Gender in Archaeology: Analysing Power and Prestige" (Nelson, 1997) it notes "From the Upper Palaeolithic to state-level societies, the most common interpretation of female figurines is that they are goddesses, most often "mother goddesses". This simple statement raises an obvious insight into man's ideology. Nelson's simple observation is reinforced by records of countless "mother goddesses" found spanning a plethora of religions, for example Hinduism has "Durga" a feminine deity of energy, ancient Egyptians had "Bast" protector of mothers and new-borns. Ancient Greeks worshipped "Gaia" the embodiment of life, it was believed that from her everything was created, Norse mythology had "Frigga" the goddess of fertility and union. There are many more spanning countless religions, one could even make the argument that the Virgin Mary is a modern adaptation of the "mother goddess" trope. All these examples considered, the proposition that Neolithic man also worshipped a mother goddess is not a theory lacking in foundation, and to expand on this proposition, it

would be easy to assume that the Venus figures functioned as effigies to symbolise such a Goddess. Nevertheless, such as with the cave paintings there is no concrete evidence to solidify any hypothesis.

Whilst the Venus figures are synonymous with Palaeolithic sculptures, there are models found that do not serve to depict the female form. Other sources of prehistoric inspiration were the animals surrounding the settlement, such fixations are also observable in early man's cave art. What's interesting is that typically, the archaeological records show that the forming of the Venus figures were some of the earliest sculptural works typically dating from 40,000 BC onwards, whilst animal figures and anthropomorphic sculptures typically dated back from 30,000 BC onwards. However, there are anomalies to this examination, such as "The Löwenmensch" or "Lion-man of the Hohlenstein-Stadel" figurine.



Fig. 7: Lion-man of the Hohlenstein-Stadel figurine

According to (Cook, 2019) this exquisite sculpture was discovered in Germany and believed be between 35,000 to 40,000 years old. Interestingly this figure was found approximately 30 meters from the mouth of the Stadel cave system within a chamber of sorts containing a plethora of notable objects, ranging from tools and basic jewellery and decorative reindeer antlers. What's fascinating about the Lion man statue is that there may be more to learn from the actual location than the artefact itself. According (Cook, 2019) the Stadel cave "faces north and does not get the sun. It is cold and the density of debris accumulated by human activities is much less than at other sites. This was not a good place to live." (Cook, 2019) then goes on to explain her hypothesis on the use of the Stadel cave and the Löwenmensch's context within it.

These characteristics suggest that Stadel Cave was only used occasionally as a place where people would come together around a fire to share a particular understanding of the world articulated through beliefs, symbolised in sculpture and acted out in rituals.

Whilst one could certainly argue this theory is an imaginative one, that does not however mean it is not founded upon compelling facts, the uninhabitable nature of the Stadel Cave coupled with the artefacts found within the Löwenmensch's chamber is certainly a telling indicator to the kind of utility this cave held to Neolithic man, you could certainly liken Cooks theory concerning the cave to today's use of churches or other places of worship. Another factor to consider is the expert craftsmanship put into the ivory Lion-man figure, especially considering the primitive tools that were available to early man, experts have concluded that it was created with a kind of flint stone knife. Cook explains that an experiment was undertaken by a man named Wulf Hein, his task was to recreate the Lion man figure exactly, using the same source material (ivory) and to use only the tools that existed at the time,

this basically comprised of sharpened pieces of flint varying in size. The finished project took Wulf Hein over 400 hours to complete, there is a video on the page showing his progression. When the sheer amount of effort and time that must have been laid into creating such a piece is considered, one fact cannot be ignored, and that is that the Löwenmensch figure must have held extreme importance to whomever possessed it. It is hard to comprehend a human during the period as distant as the Neolithic, putting aside 100's of hours to craft an ornament that had no direct aid towards survival, religious deity or not this level of creative dedication is astounding, even for today. If the Löwenmensch figure is proof of anything, it is that 35,000 years ago humankind placed just as much passion and value into artistic creation as we currently do today. It could be said that this fact is as profound and insightful as the motives behind such creations. Furthermore a religious or ritualistic motive could possibly go as far as to explain the effort expended into the creation of the Löwenmensch figure, as easily observed today, some of man's most impressive artistic creations have been in the name of religion, such as Michelangelo's painting "The creation of Adam" or the statue of "Christ the redeemer" found in Rio de Janeiro. Having researched what I have, I am forced to revisit (Rydzewski, 1967) She stated, "The roots of art lie in the practical side of religion, which created a need for images representing gods, spirits or other beings to serve as a focus for ritual or worship." Whilst this statement has not been, and arguable can never truly be decisively confirmed, there is however many other expert opinions that concur. It is arguable that the analysis of Neolithic sculptures substantiated Rydzewski's statement far more than any example of cave art, due to cave arts more situational nature.

Chapter 3

Upon revisiting (Rydzewski, 1967) one could conclude that the purpose of the first sentence within the book is to provoke contemplation. “Art is a fundamental human activity” Rydzewski is boldly stating here that artistic creativity does not exist within the animal kingdom, and humanity is the sole source of art. This belief is certainly not exclusive to Rydzewski. In the book “The Methodologies of Art: An introduction” by Laurie Schneider Adams, it too explores the arts supposedly exclusive relationship with humanity. (Adams, 2010) argues that art is what separates the human race from the rest of the animal kingdom,

Animals build only in nature, and their buildings are determined by nature. These include birds’ nests, beehives, anthills and beaver dams. Molluscs, from the lowliest snail to the complex chambered nautilus, build their houses around their own bodies and carry them wherever they go. Spiders weave webs, and caterpillar’s spin cocoons. But such constructions are genetically programmed by the species that make them, and do not express individual and cultural ideas.

Adams goes on to argue that due to the practical and instinctive nature of these creations, they do not fulfil her criteria for true artistic expression. These creations, however beautiful they may be, aid the creature’s survival, therefore it is not authentic creativity for creativities sake. However, within the book “Art & Animals” by Giovanni Aloï, there is a clear disagreement with Adam’s avenue of thought. (Aloï, 2011) critiques this passage from (Adams, 2010) and concludes

Adams’s assertion that animals are genetically preprogramed, and therefore incapable of making art, reflects the essence of the widespread relational modes we have established with them – modes driven by an overly determined need to separate ourselves from them at all costs.

Aloi then continues to address this apparent philosophical trend, the discounting of animals' creative ability as a means to demonstrate humanities superiority. Aloi claims this need to portray supremacy, and the denigration of animals is ingrained within Western culture, likely stemming from the opinions of esteemed philosophers such as Rene Descartes and Martin Heidegger. Both Philosophers expressing the same essential argument as Adams, animals innately lack the ability to create original authentic art. There is certainly something to be said about the subjective nature of this argument, ones answer essentially hinges on their own perception of what constitutes "art". For some the aesthetics of a "piece" plays a leading factor, for others the motive and context take paramount place. Aloi acknowledges this and provides multiple examples of potential animal artistry. He mentions briefly the quaint



Fig. 8: A male Satin Bowerbird builds a bower

behaviour of the Bowerbird, and their fascinating approach to courtship. The male Bowerbird will construct an archlike structure fashioned from sticks and dry reeds, once the structure is complete the male bowerbird will set out in search of colourful and interesting objects to adorn his newly built structure, in a hope it will entice a mate. Worthy of note, the decoration of the nest often takes longer than the very construction, showing the bowerbirds obvious attention to aesthetics. This aesthetic obsession the male bowerbirds exhibit are not fruitless endeavours, for the females

seemingly pick their potential mates based solely upon the splendour of a male's nest. However, Adams would argue that the Bowerbirds aesthetic regard for the nest is only because it may lead to reproduction. The better the male bowerbird decorates his nest, the higher the chance that it will attract a female and ultimately lead to procreation. Therefore, the motive behind the Bowerbirds alleged artistry is solely evolutionary. Making such constructions as (Adams, 2010) states "genetically programmed".

Aloi makes another interesting example for animal artistry and mentions that Adam's has almost purposely overlooked the work of a zoologist and surrealist painter called Desmond Morriss. Upon research one can find that Morriss was not only famous for

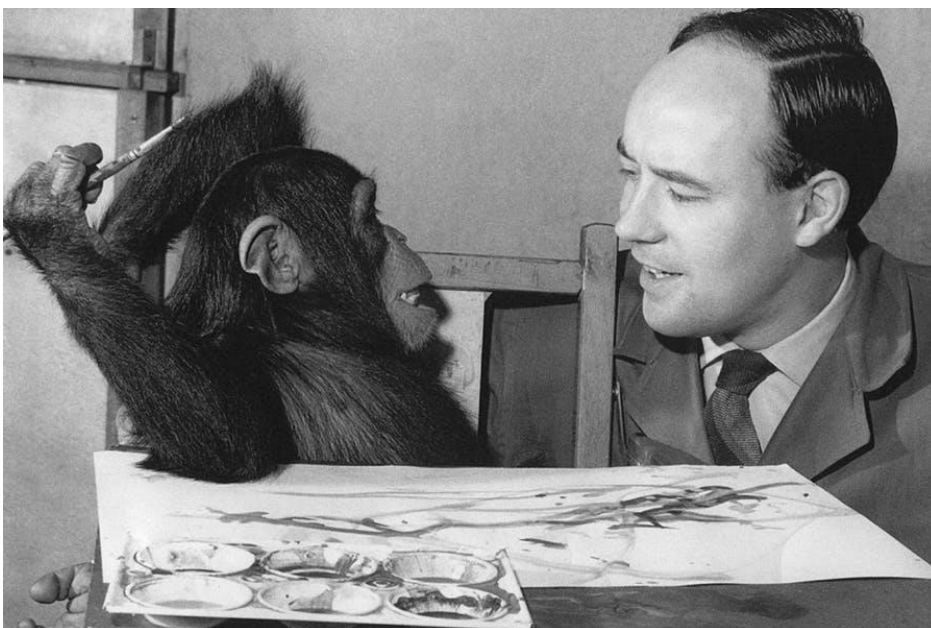


Fig. 9: Congo with Desmond Morris in 1957

his numerous paintings and books but also for his artistic endeavours with a small chimp called Congo. Morriss nurtured a supposedly "artistic" streak in Congo from a young age, and by the age of four, Congo had created over 400 drawings and paintings, fans of which included Picasso and Dali. Congo's style was labelled lyrical abstract expressionism and Morriss eventually organised Congo's work to be exhibited in the ICA in 1957, however understandably the responses were mixed. Due to the chaotic or "abtract" nature of Congo's, many hesitated to call it art, as



Fig.10:
*Congo's 26th
Painting
Session*

there is arguably very little evidence of conscious creativity. Congo's paintings could very easily be the outcome of a handlers coercion, much like many of the other professed "animal paintings" that emerge, when in actuality the "art" is merely the result of repetition and training on the handlers part, thus ultimately making the creations void when considering true artistic expression. This "artistic" coercion or trick is often seen with elephants in zoo's, due to their high intelligence it is easier to teach such interactions with brush and paper, some going so far as to have handlers guide the path of the brush by tugging the elephants ears. However, whilst Morriss admittedly held "drawing sessions" with Congo, these were to only familiarise him with the idea and act of painting, once Congo understood the activity, he took to it enthusiastically. In a recorded interview (Desmond Morris - Congo the artistic chimpanzee (17/37), 2017) Morriss details Congo's painting habits and ability, "Congo's paintings were extraordinary because he did control them visually. He got no reward for them. If I tried to stop him in the middle of painting, he would scream and have a temper tantrum." Morriss continues to elaborate on Congo's work "If I tried to get him to go on after he'd finished a painting, he wouldn't. The lines were placed exactly where he wanted them on the page, and he would have a basic

quality of the artist which is thematic variation.” If Morriss is telling the truth, the fact that Congo was not rewarded during these painting sessions is significant, this excludes all coercion-based motives, indicating that Congo’s creations were in fact a result of genuine artistic creation as basic as it may be, this is creation for strictly creation sake, unlike the Bowerbirds reproductively motivated exhibitions. One could certainly argue that Congo’s work is some of the strongest evidence available when disputing arts exclusivity to humanity. The only logical counterargument for those that believe in Adam’s premise, is to attack the legitimacy of Morriss’s claims regarding Congo. One must remember that Morriss was ultimately profiting from Congo’s creations, so it was within his own interests to portray Congo’s works as actual products of authentic creativity. Nevertheless, there are no shortage of videos showing Congo’s work process. Each showing no sign of intervention from Morriss himself, he simply provides the paint, brush and paper, and Congo goes about creating an individual pattern or composition, placing adjustments where he sees fit. This footage makes Congo’s creations hard to dismiss, displaying his clear enthusiasm for the pattern making. Another factor to consider is Morriss’s reputation, if it was discovered that he had embellished the truth as regards to Congo’s work, his whole career would be questioned. His many books, films and tv programmes would lose all credibility. Furthermore, upon investigation Congo is not the only example of a chimpanzee experimenting with a brush and paint, but he appears to be the most prolific and proficient, creating notably more complex compositions. Whilst there is no record of chimps creating recognisable pictorial images, one can question the ape’s situational comprehension, they may merely enjoy the feel of the brush applying paint, and we are aimlessly scrambling to assign meaning to it, as a means to explain our own nature.

Later in the same interview whilst still explaining Congo's capability, Morriss voiced an observation that is very profound, especially within the context of my personal inquiry,

They've called Lascaux the birth of art. Lascaux isn't the birth of art – it's the adolescence – this is the birth of art, this is the beginning of aesthetic expression. They may only be abstract patterns, but they are visually controlled and varied.

Of course, referring to the cave paintings found in Lascaux, Morriss is stating here that humanities' competency for art, does not originate with early prehistoric man, but with our evolutionary cousins, the apes. However What Morris is saying does bare merit, apes however are not our direct evolutionary predecessor, though they are not human, therefore insinuating that our artistic potential doesn't stem from our humanity but from the evolutionary traits acquired when we closer resembled our ape counterparts. This notion directly disputes Adams's, and much of the western world's understanding that art is an inherently human property. After researching Humanities ambiguous connections to art and creativity, one factor is blatantly evident. We as a species are almost magnetically drawn to creative expression, and the same amount of passion is displayed no matter the environment in which it is pursued, be it the harsh lands of the Neolithic ice age or the apparent existential angst of today, we use art to seek meaning, but I fear seeking the meaning within art is a far more problematic pursuit, nevertheless an important one in terms of understanding ourselves and how culture has and will evolve.

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