

# Aesthetics in Animals and Humans

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My seminar focuses on two questions. First, can we learn anything about human aesthetics by studying animals and plants? Second, what are the uniquely human aspects of aesthetics and art? I will start talking about animals and this will include research I did before starting to work with humans and cultural evolution. Topics addressed include messages (i.e. what organism talk about), design elements and biological coevolution between sender/signals and receivers. One conclusion will be that there are aesthetic aspects to signaling in nature. That is, how signals are designed and responded to cannot be fully explained by functional needs.

When turning to humans I will first make some comparisons with signaling in animals and plants, and mention some theories of art inspired by evolutionary biology. Then, I will consider some unique features of human aesthetics and art. For instance, that we create art and that aesthetic qualities can be a goal on its own. Finally, I will consider whether these differences tell us something important about human cultural evolution.