The Origins of Art

Humans make art, and art is all around us. The magnificent prehistoric paintings of horses, bison, and humans at the Lascaux and Altamira caves were created by artists living 30,000 years ago. What came before? Why did our ancestors start being artistic? During the class, we will explore cave art and other early creative works, including bird-bone musical instruments, carved ivory figurines, shell ornaments, and older more disputed symbolic artifacts. Placed in broader archaeological context, we will learn about prehistoric cultures and debate the shamanistic, ecological, and hunting theories advanced to account for early art.

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Instructor: Dr. Sonia Harmand

This course satisfies the Explore and Understand the Fine and Performing Arts (ARTS) SBC category.