

Ancient art may have been created by people with autistic traits, study suggests

Much of the world's earliest great art is likely to have been created by gifted early humans on the autism spectrum, new research by British scientists suggests.

Archaeologists working in conjunction with autism experts have concluded that humans were able to produce the first realistic art some 33,000 years ago because ice age conditions drove the selection of particular combinations of genes.

Harsh conditions favoured the natural selection of genes which predisposed some humans to develop abilities to focus on tasks in great detail for long periods; to perceive their environments in three-dimensional terms in an enhanced way; to develop greater image retention abilities; and to develop greater aptitudes to identify and analyse patterns of geography and movement.

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But these same newly evolved abilities also made it possible to produce realistic art – dramatic and dynamic images of animals from memory and to draw them in perspective (to mimic 3D reality) in artistic compositions reflecting the patterns of nature.

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“We suspect that the early development of inherited autism was in part an evolutionary response to ultra-harsh climatic conditions at the height of the last Ice Age. Without the development of autism-related abilities in some people, it is conceivable that humans would not have been able to survive in a freezing environment in which finding food required enhanced skills”, [researcher Penny Spikins] said.

Read full, original post: [Prehistoric autism helped produce much of the world's earliest great art, study says](#)