



# Challenging building blocks: Art, music and agriculture



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This is the third series in our special collection on challenging building blocks of our past, present and future. This series consists of three focussed articles. Firstly, 'The building blocks of art and its accompanying role and meaning' is written by ethicist Chris Jones and Karoo palaeontologist Juri van den Heever. They explore the evolution of art and start with a brief evolutionary overview of the origin of land vertebrates, which culminated in the rise of our species. They then review three iconic phases of human evolution and subsequently consider more contemporary developments regarding human art intertwined with their interpretation of art's role and meaning. They briefly (Jones & Van den Heever 2022a) discuss:

[A] broader account of the evolution of art in which these three phases are firmly based and through which [*their*] understanding of and engagement with the evolutionary development of these stages are elucidated and complemented. (p. 1 of 9)

The article ends with particular views about language and the role and meaning of art. In the second article, 'Perspectives on music and evolution', Stellenbosch musicologist, Winfried Lüdemann (2022) provides a paleoanthropological approach, which places music into an evolutionary paradigm adding important perspectives to our understanding of this phenomenon. Lüdemann (2022) contemplates, explore and discuss:

[T]he question whether music is an adaptation that has survival value in the classical Darwinian sense [...]. Views on the origin of music in conjunction with the emergence of language and as a domain for the expression of emotion, linked to music's benefits for social coherence, are discussed. More recent views on the emergence of consciousness, on semiosis and on music as a manifestation of biocultural co-evolution, especially in conjunction with ritual, are then presented. (p. 1 of 13)

Finally, he examines the merit of exploiting the concept of play to help account for the systematicity of music's semiosis. In the third and last article in this series, Jones and Van den Heever (2022b) stated that the:

[O]rigins of agriculture lie in the distant past, approximately 12 000 years ago, when hunter-gatherers of the Paleolithic embraced sedentism at the dawn of the Neolithic. The variety of life history transitions emanating from this unique phenomenon have had an enormous impact on the biodiversity of the planet, whilst subjecting humanity to a variety of life changing physical and social challenges right up to the present. The ever-present consequences of the Agricultural Revolution continue to demand our attention, yet frustrate our efforts, on a seemingly perpetual basis, to effectively manage the outcomes. (p. 1 of 9)

They:

[R]eview the origins and lasting after-effects of the Agricultural Revolution, and its impact on the human condition, with reference to sedentism, nutrition, health issues, disease, gender discrimination as well as mythmaking and religion. (p. 1 of 9)

The three articles are based on original research and no part of this series was plagiarised from another publication or published elsewhere. The target audience of the three articles in this series are international scholars, peers and researchers with an interest in the specific topics addressed.

## Reference

Jones, C. & Van den Heever, J., 2022a, The building blocks of art and its accompanying role and meaning, *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 78(2), a7572. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v78i2.7572>

Jones, C. & Van den Heever, J., 2022b, 'Building blocks of agriculture', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 78(2), a8023. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v78i2.8023>

Lüdemann, W.A., 2022, 'Perspectives on music and evolution', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 78(2), a7747. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v78i2.7747>

**Note:** Special Collection: Challenging Building Blocks of Our Present, Past and Future, sub-edited by Chris Jones (Stellenbosch University) and Juri van den Heever (Stellenbosch University).