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Art in the Making: The evolutionary origins of visual art as a communication signal

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Larissa Mendoza Straffon was born in 1977 in Mexico City. In 1997 she started her studies in archaeology at the National School of Anthropology and History in Mexico. During her study, she carried out extensive anthropological and archaeological fieldwork in the Mexican states of Oaxaca, Hidalgo, Estado de México, Querétaro and Baja California Sur, and did an internship at the National Museums Organisation. In 2004 she graduated with honours for her thesis on the Archaic Great Mural rock art tradition of the Baja California Peninsula, obtaining a licentiate degree in archaeology. The same year she entered the Human Origins master at the Faculty of Archaeology of Leiden University in the Netherlands. She took on the Aurignacian art of Swabia, Germany, as her thesis topic and obtained her master's degree in 2005. In the summer of that year she participated in the archaeological excavations at the site of Hohle Fels, Germany. In 2007 she began her PhD research on the evolutionary origins of visual art at Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society (LUCAS). From 2008-2011 she was a board member of the Dutch Postgraduate School for Art History. In 2013 she was visiting researcher at the Applied Evolutionary Epistemology Lab (AppEEL) at the Centre for Philosophy of Science in the University of Lisbon, Portugal. In 2007 she planned and coordinated the international workshop 'Complexity Perspectives on the Origins of Art, Creativity and Culture' at Leiden University. In 2013, at AppEEL, she co-organised two graduate schools on current issues in Evolutionary Theory, and the 'International Conference on Evolutionary Patterns' in Lisbon, Portugal. She has lectured three BA courses at Leiden University, has presented her research at various international conferences (ICOM, IFRAO, EAA, AAA, UISPP), and has authored and co-authored several academic publications. Currently she is editing a volume on cultural phylogenetics for the Springer series 'Interdisciplinary Evolution Research'.

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