

The First Jewelry: Early Humans Were Into Beauty, Too!

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By Kimberly Francis

When do you think humans started wearing jewelry? Five hundred years ago? Five thousand? Five million? A few years ago, a group of researchers led by Christopher Henshilwood of the State University of New York at Stony Brook discovered what it believes is the "earliest jewelry" in the South African Blombus Cave. Surprisingly, it wasn't diamonds, but shell beads! The shells were dated to be about 75,000 years old, pushing back the time attributed to humans for the first abstract (or symbolic) thought by 30,000 years. The production of art or jewelry is generally accepted among archaeologists as an indicator of symbolic thinking.

Interestingly, at about the same time, another group of researchers led by John Bower of University of California at Davis, found at Loiyangalani, a dig site in the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania, two ostrich eggshell beads that are tentatively dated to about 70,000 years. Bower believes the bead findings are very significant because "beads are tangible evidence of a concept of self. You're not going to decorate yourself if you have no concept of self." These two finds really make you wonder about How It All Began in the jewelry world, at least.

Previously, the "first" jewelry (incidentally, also African) was thought to be about 45,000 years old. This time period occurred during what's known as the middle Stone Age, a time when many signs of "modernity" are believed to have blossomed in early humans including cave paintings and sophisticated bone tools. Up until these African finds, most scientists considered "modern behavior" to have started in Europe around 40,000 years ago. The French cave paintings are the most well known examples.

At the Blombus Cave site, about forty pea-sized mussel shell beads were found in groups of up to seventeen. Since the nearest body of water located close to the cave is thought to have been over forty miles away, this meant that the shells were carried back to the cave specifically for some purpose. They also contained traces of ochre, a pigment used by early humans to paint caves or color skin and clothes.

Why do scientists think these shells were components of beaded jewelry? They all appear to be perforated in the same spot in the same way, prepped for being strung on a piece of leather and

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leaving a distinctive pattern on the shells. The researchers also noted the presence of "facets," or flat areas, unlike any you'd find in nature, probably formed through being strung and rubbing against each other.

"Big deal," you may think? These shell necklaces and bracelets tell us a lot about our human ancestors. For instance, this jewelry is real evidence that early humans could use physical objects to stand for something abstract, such as beauty. The bead jewelry could have been used to serve a growing need among early people: a way people identified themselves or their status in a group, or maybe even for trading.

We think that they mostly wanted to look and feel beautiful by wearing beads.

Kimberly Francis is a popular Rhode Island jewelry designer. She's inspired by the hottest fashion trends to bring you the latest designs in jewelry looks that won't go out of style in just one season. Visit

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Body Jewelry: an unusual way of enhancing the beauty of your own body

By Angela Davis

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Since ancient times body jewelry has been a part of the culture and heritage of different religions. It has been known to be an essential part of the clothing and appearance of the people in many regions of the world. At different parts of time through the centuries it was also used to signify the class demarcations prevalent in society at that point of time.

How ever in recent times it has acquired a new dimension. Body jewelry has never been in such high demand. The human body is not merely a body, it is a piece of art which has its own innate beauty and body jewelry is the perfect way to enhance the beauty of your body. Not only can you decorate your body with it, but you can also use it to bring into focus certain parts of your body or to enhance the beauty of certain parts.

Body jewelry items are usually for particular places on the human body. These more common places for body jewelry include the nose, eyebrow, nipple, ear lobes and naval, along with ear plugs (both curved and straight barbells). As fashion trends keep changing, the various parts where you can use body jewelry and the manner in which you can use it also keeps changing.

Nose body jewelry comes either in the classic captive circular barbell, or in the form of a nose screw.

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The nose screw can either be jeweled or plain, depending upon your preference. Eyebrow body jewelry is similar to that of the nose, in the sense that the eyebrow body jewelry also has the small captive barbell. This is now being made with a dangling, sparkling charm to hang from the upper most part of your eyebrow barbell. The eyebrow body jewelry can be either curved or straight with a charm of any style or color dangling from the top.

Nipple and naval body jewelry is one of the more popular types of body jewelry, it is especially popular amongst the youth or the more adventurous in spirit. Nipple body jewelry includes the nipple barbells and the nipple shields. Naval body jewelry designs are also endless.

Whatever kind of body jewelry you use or wear it is important to keep some pointers in mind. Such as what kind of material is that specific body jewelry made off, is your skin allergic to it and is the piercing for the body jewelry done in a sterile and antiseptic environment.

This kind of jewelry is available for almost every conceivable part of your body. There are endless styles, designs, colors and textures in which body jewelry is made. What ever your budget, whether it is low end or high end; body jewelry is available in every range to suit your pocket as well as your tastes.

Body jewelry is not merely a decorative fixture; it is also a personal style statement. You can use it to bring attention or to take away attention from a specific part of your body. It is quite in vogue these days and has been in existence since time immemorial. If you have the attitude and the panache you can carry of any kind of body jewelry.

Looking for information about Jewelry?Go to: <http://www.merryjewelry.com>'Merry Jewelry' is published by Angela Davis – The Complete Jewelry Resource Directory Check out more Jewelry articles at: <http://www.merryjewelry.com/archive>

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