

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Imagination and Human Origins

Friday, June 1, 2018



Sheldon Brown is the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Endowed Chair of Digital Media and Learning at UC San Diego, where he is also the Director of the Arthur C. Clarke Center for Human Imagination and a co-founder of the California Institute of Telecommunications and Information Technologies. His virtual reality and cinematic installations have been shown at museums around the world, including the Museum of Contemporary Art in Shanghai, The Exploratorium San Francisco, Ars Electronica in Austria, The Kitchen in NYC, Zacheta Gallery in Warsaw, Centro Nacional in Mexico City and Oi Futuro in Rio de Janeiro. His work is supported in part by the National Science Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, IBM, Intel, Sony, and Google.



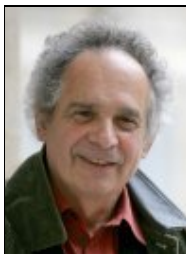
Augustin Fuentes is the Edmund P. Joyce C.S.C. Professor of Anthropology at the University of Notre Dame. Fuentes has conducted research across four continents and two-million years of human history and is interested in both the big questions and the small details of the human experience. His current explorations include the roles of creativity and imagination in human evolution, multispecies anthropology, evolutionary theory, and the structures of race and racism. Fuentes' recent books include *Race, Monogamy, and Other Lies They Told You: Busting Myths about Human Nature* (University of California Press, 2015), *Conversations on Human Nature(s)* (Routledge, 2015) and *The Creative Spark: How Imagination Made Humans Exceptional* (Dutton, 2017).



Caren Walker is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at UC San Diego and director of the Early Learning & Cognition Laboratory. She received her Ph.D. in psychology from the University of California, Berkeley in 2015. Dr. Walker's research is in the area of cognitive development, examining the various learning mechanisms that underlie knowledge acquisition and change. This work addresses basic questions about the nature of mental representations in human cognition, and she is particularly interested in the early development of abstract thought.



Lyn Wadley is a Professor based in the Evolutionary Studies Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand (South Africa) where she specializes in Middle Stone Age cognitive archaeology. She is an A1-rated National Research Foundation researcher and recipient of some of South Africa's top research awards. In 2014 and 2015, she was on the Thomson-Reuters High Citation list that records the top 1% of researchers globally. Her research into cognitive archaeology provides theory and methods for demonstrating that some Stone Age technologies can be proxies for complex brain power. She has excavated three important Middle Stone Age archaeological sites: Rose Cottage Cave in the eastern Free State and Sibudu and Border Caves in KwaZulu-Natal.



Maurice Bloch is a Franco-British anthropologist with an interest in cognitive psychology. He is a Professor at the London School of Economics and Political Science and a fellow of the British Academy. He was European Professor at the College de France in 2006. He has taught and lectured in many countries including the USA. His earliest book, *Placing the Dead* (Berkeley Square House, 1971) concerned Madagascar. His most recent book is *Anthropology and the Cognitive Challenge* (Cambridge University Press, 2014). At present, he is preparing a book on the topic of this CARTA conference.

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Lera Boroditsky is an Associate Professor of Cognitive Science at UC San Diego and Editor in Chief of *Frontiers in Cultural Psychology*. She previously served on the faculty at MIT and at Stanford. Her research is on the relationships between mind, world, and language (or how humans get so smart). She has been named one of "25 Visionaries Who are Changing Your World in 2011" by the *Utne Reader*, and is also a Searle Scholar, a McDonnell scholar, recipient of an NSF Career award, and an APA Distinguished Scientist lecturer. She once used the Indonesian exclusive "we" correctly before breakfast, and was proud of herself about it all day.



Polly Wiessner is a Professor of Anthropology at Arizona State University and a Research Professor at the University of Utah. She has conducted fieldwork among the Kalahari Bushmen for 40 years, focusing social security networks to reduce risk in the hunter-gatherer way of life. Her recent Kalahari work has been on the anthropology of the night to understand what is accomplished socially in the hours around the hearth at the close of the day. Her second field site is among the Enga of Papua New Guinea where she has conducted 30 years of research on exchange, ritual and warfare.



Adrie and Alfons Kennis are twin Dutch paleo-artists who make reconstructions of extinct animal species, especially early humans. Iconic and popular reconstructions include Cheddar Man, the Predmosti 3 *Homo sapiens*, Lucy, *Australopithecus sediba*, Turkana boy, *Homo floresiensis*, the Jebel Irhoud *Homo sapiens*, and Ötzi the "Iceman". They have been commissioned by many museums, including the Natural History Museum (London), the Moesgaard Museum (Denmark), and the Neanderthalmuseum Mettmann (Germany). Their work has featured on the cover of *National Geographic* and in Dr. Alice Robert's book, *Evolution, the Human Story* (Dorling Kindersley, 2011). In 2014 and 2015 they received the Lanzendorf PaleoArt Prize for Sculpture.



Alysson Muotri earned a BSc in Biological Sciences from the State University of Campinas in 1995 and a Ph.D. in Genetics in 2001 from University of Sao Paulo, in Brazil. He moved to the Salk Institute as Pew Latin America Fellow in 2002 for a postdoctoral training in the fields of neuroscience and stem cell biology. He has been a Professor at the School of Medicine, UC San Diego since late 2008. His research focuses on modeling social neurological conditions, such as autism, and brain evolution using human cerebral organoids. He has received several awards, including the prestigious NIH Director's New Innovator Award, NARSAD, Emerald Foundation Young Investigator Award, Tokyo Surugadai Award, Rock Star of Innovation, NIH-EUREKA among others.

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- Winter 2019 **CARTA 10th Anniversary: Revisiting the Agenda**
- Spring 2019 **Anthropogeny: The Perspective from Africa**
- Fall 2019 **Impact of Early Social Development on the Human Mind**

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