



Adam's Nose, and the Making of Humankind

Michael Stoddart

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This book is about the evolution of the sense of smell, from its bacterial origin 3.4 billion years ago, to today's modern, sophisticated humans with an insatiable appetite for perfumes and fragrances. It explains how smell works and how animals sense the environment. The relationship between sex and smell drives much of animal behaviour, and the significance of the human loss of the vomeronasal organ — a part of the sense of smell in animals that responds to sex smells — is identified as a seminal event in the making of humankind.

Humans are far more than animals, however, and Adam's Nose explores incense and perfumes, as well as the odour imagery in art, literature and poetry. It is written for readers interested in what makes us human, and does not presuppose a high level of scientific understanding. The text is comprehensive and provides key references to the relevant scientific literature. The book will appeal to scientists and students in a range of biological disciplines, including human evolution, anthropology, olfactory communication, animal behaviour, perfumery and aromatherapy.

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