

Dr. Elisabeth Cornwell

Madison Avenue or Charles Darwin: Who invented beauty?



Is beauty created by Madison Avenue ad men (and women), or is beauty a human universal as evolutionary psychologists argue? If it is a human universal — why? What are the adaptive advantages to clear skin, a shapely figure. Are there signals specific to what women want as opposed to what men want? Why do men and women differ in what they find attractive? What do they find similarly attractive? By looking at humans through the Darwinian lens of sexual selection, you will never look at another advertisement the same way again.

Dr. R. Elisabeth 'Liz' Cornwell, Ph.D., is the first Executive Director of the U.S. branch of the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science (RDFRS). She also has years of experience as a businesswoman, working in marketing and sales in the semiconductor industry in California. She decided, in her forties, to go back to university to do a doctorate in psychology, at the University of St Andrews, in Scotland. An evolutionary psychologist,

her research has examined the underlying mechanisms of human mate selection, looking at such factors as hormones, pheromones, aging, asymmetry, and facial features. More recently she has been doing research at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, exploring the relationship of various psychological traits to religious belief, across the spectrum from strong theism to strong non-theism.

**Saturday, March 12, 2011
1:30 pm**

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