Between Art and Anthropology: Contemporary Ethnographic Practice


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Abstract or Description

Between Art and Anthropology provides new and challenging arguments for considering contemporary art and anthropology in terms of fieldwork practice. Artists and anthropologists share a set of common practices that raise similar ethical issues, which the authors explore in depth for the first time. The book presents a strong argument for encouraging artists and anthropologists to learn directly from each other's practices in the field. It goes beyond the so-called ethnographic turn of much contemporary art and the crisis of representation in anthropology, in productively exploring the implications of the new anthropology of the senses, and ethical issues, for future art-anthropology collaborations. The contributors to this exciting volume consider the work of artists such as Joseph Beuys, Suzanne Lacy, Marcus Coates, Cameron Jamie, and Mohini Chandra. With cutting-edge essays from a range of key thinkers such as acclaimed art critic Lucy R. Lippard, and distinguished anthropologists George E. Marcus and Steve Feld, Between Art and Anthropology will be essential reading for students, artists and scholars across a number of fields.

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The ethnographic turn has been the focus of recent debate between artists and anthropologists. Crucial to it has been an expansive notion of the ethnographic. No longer considered a specialised technique, the essays of Clifford and others have proposed a broader and more eclectic interpretation of ethnography – an approach long considered to be the exclusive preserve of academic anthropology. I discuss how the renewal of material and sensory engagement in anthropology as well as anthropologists’ growing interest in the turn in contemporary art practice toward the use of ethnographic fieldwork methods have inspired me to experiment with new pedagogical methods.