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978-0-521-36894-0 - The Anthropology of Art, Second Edition

Robert Layton

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Robert Layton provides a readable and authoritative introduction to the richness and diversity of art forms in non-Western societies. He addresses the problems of aesthetic appreciation across cultures, the varied uses of art, and the fundamental problem of what constitutes 'art' in societies varying from the traditional kingdoms of West Africa, with their specialist craftsmen using precious metals, to Australian hunter-gatherers, with their sand paintings and body decoration.

Art forms discussed include bark, sand and rock painting, ivory, bone and wood carving, brass casting, masks, and house and body decoration. To understand the meaning of these diverse productions demands an understanding of cultural contexts. Layton relates particular art productions to rituals, myths and power relations. He also discusses and illustrates current perspectives on art within anthropological and sociological theory. This is a revised version of a book first published in 1981 and widely used in courses for archaeologists, anthropologists and art historians.

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