

VORTRAG IM OBERSEMINAR
MONTAG, 14.06.2021

18:15 - 20 Uhr: Zoom-Meeting

Prof. Dr. Nicholas Thomas (Director of the Museum of Archeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge)

The Anthropology of Art in the 21st Century

Over recent decades, it is striking that art has been marginal in anthropology, and that, as research on the discipline's classic themes - politics, religion and kinship - has fully embraced new technologies and globalization, art studies in anthropology have retained a focus on Indigenous expressions. This is surprising for two reasons. First, the art world and art markets are prominent and vital realms in public culture, economies, diplomacy and in many other senses. Before Covid-19, major museums were receiving millions of visitors annually, while biennales and art fairs in Asia, Africa and South America exemplify realignments of cultural production and circulation. Second, if contemporary art practice is marked by a bewildering range of styles and fashions, an 'ethnographic turn', or rather the adoption of a variety of documentary, observational and participatory methods has become notable, as has work addressing colonial archives and cross-cultural interactions. In other words, and weirdly, art seems to have become more anthropological, as anthropology has become less interested in art.

It is time to change this. Contemporary art is not an elite field undeserving of anthropological attention, but a realm critical to the expression and negotiation of personal identity, history, migration and attachments to place, among other key cultural and political themes. And - this talk argues - the challenges, methods and ambitions of art have much to offer contemporary anthropology and vice versa.

Request link via email:

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Oberseminar

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