



Handbook of Material Culture

By Christopher Tilley, Webb Keane, Susanne Küchler-Fogden, Mike Rowlands

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The study of material culture is concerned with the relationship between persons and things in the past and in the present, in urban and industrialized and in small-scale societies across the globe. The Handbook of Material Culture provides a critical survey of the theories, concepts, intellectual debates, substantive domains and traditions of study characterizing the analysis of things. It is cutting-edge: rather than simply reviewing the field as it currently exists. It also attempts to chart the future: the manner in which material culture studies may be extended and developed. . The Handbook of Material Culture is divided into five sections. Section I maps material culture studies as a theoretical and conceptual field. Section II examines the relationship between material forms, the human body and the senses. Section III focuses on subject-object relations. Section IV considers things in terms of processes and transformations in terms of production, exchange and consumption, performance and the significance of things over the long-term. Section V considers the contemporary politics and poetics of displaying, representing and conserving material and the manner in which this impacts on notions of heritage, tradition and identity. The Handbook charts an interdisciplinary field of studies that makes an unique and fundamental contribution to an understanding of what it means to be human. It will be of interest to all who work in the social and historical sciences, from anthropologists and archaeologists to human geographers to scholars working in heritage, design and cultural studies.

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Review

"The contributors pay serious attention to older and newer theoretical perspectives from a wide variety of sources, including literary currents of the 1990's. Architects, economists, and historians are largely welcome as visitors to this handbook." (J. L. Cooper 2006-10-09)

About the Author

He has written a number of books on archaeological theory exploring the relations between hermeneutic, structuralist and post-structuralist perspectives and material culture.

Professor Michael Rowlands teaches cultural heritage and museum anthropology at the Department of Anthropology, University College, London. His research interests include the theorisation and conceptualisation of cultural heritage, material culture studies and cultural property in relation to long term social and cultural change. He has conducted fieldwork research in West Africa (Nigeria, Cameroon, Liberia) to investigate negotiations of material culture, heritage and museums. He currently coordinates a cultural heritage research project between China and Europe funded by the EU and works in partnership with the National Taiwan University on the revitalisation of indigenous cultural knowledge. His research also focuses on post-conflict recovery through the Global Post-Conflict Recovery Network. In 1973 he was awarded a PhD in Anthropology by University College London.

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