

The Anthropology of  
ART, AESTHETICS AND SYMBOLISM

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In this seminar we will discuss significant theoretical and ethnographic work in the anthropology of art and symbolism. I aim to give you a solid grounding in methods of symbolic analysis and to acquaint you with current anthropological research in the study of art, aesthetics and symbolism. We will focus in particular on the processes through which meanings, values and orientations are embodied in objects and performances.

Students are expected, first and foremost, to attend class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Each of you will prepare an "opening question" to begin discussion of one of the assigned readings, and act as co-leader of the seminar for that session. You'll also present a discussion of at least one additional article to supplement the assigned readings. Your written work will consist of a research paper (approximately 20 pages) on a subject related to the seminar. Near the end of the semester you'll make an oral presentation of this paper, and distribute an abstract and bibliography to the class.

#### WEEKLY SCHEDULE

September 7: Introduction to the seminar

September 14: *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression* by Steven Feld

September 21: Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*,

September 28: Franz Boas, *Primitive Art*. Recommended NW Coast iconography readings,

October 5: *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* by Alfred Gell  
chapters 1, 2, 5, 7 and 9. On Blackboard Electronic Reserves.

October 12: Claude Levi-Strauss: (1) "The Story of Asdiwal;" (2) *The Way of the Masks*,  
chapters TBA. On Blackboard Electronic Reserves.  
museum visit reports.

October 19: TBA

October 26: Turner, Victor, *From Ritual to Theater*

November 2 NO CLASS MEETING (I will be out of town). Out of class watch DVD of *The Fast Runner*.

November 9: Paul Apak Angilirq *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* (text, and discussion of film)

November 16: *The Death of Authentic Primitive Art* by Shirley Errington

November 23: NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING

November 30: Student reports

December 7: Student reports

December 9 or another date to be decided in class: Make-up for Nov.2. Student Reports.