



Objects and Meaning: New Perspectives on Art and Craft

Fariello M. Anna, Paula Owen

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Throughout the 20th century, there were increasing numbers of artists who chose to work within a fine art aesthetic (i.e., expressive, communicative, innovative, unique) while simultaneously embracing qualities associated with craft production (i.e., intimacy, materiality, labor, ritual). At the periphery of their world loomed issues of status, gender, community, and economics. This fluid situation made for an exciting mix of ideas that helped perpetuate an ongoing debate within an art world no longer as monothematic as it appeared in print. *Objects and Meaning* expands upon a national conversation questioning how various academic disciplines and cultural institutions approach and assign meaning to artist-made objects in postmodern North America. Although most of the discourse since the mid 20th century revolved around the split between art and craft, the contributors to this collection of essays take a broader view, examining the historical, cultural, and theoretical perspectives that defined the parameters of that conversation. Their focus is on issues concerning works that appeared to 'cross over' from mainstream art to an amorphous and pluralistic aesthetic milieu that has yet to be defined. The essays collected for this volume, loosely organized into three groupings_Historical Contexts, Cultural Systems, and Theoretical Frames_contribute to a deeper understanding of the meaning of objects and how that meaning comes to be defined. Although the style of writing in this collection ranges from passionate conviction to cool observation with points of view from different professional backgrounds, each essay reflects original ideas introduced into the cultural dialogue during this period.



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