



Crafting 'The Indian': Knowledge, Desire, and Play in Indianist Reenactment

Petra Tjitske Kalshoven

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In Europe, Indian hobbyism, or Indianism, has developed out of a strong fascination with Native American life in the 18th and 19th centuries. "Indian hobbyists" dress in homemade replicas of clothing, craft museum-quality replicas of artifacts, meet in fields dotted with tepees and reenact aspects of North American Indian lifeworlds, using ethnographies, travel diaries, and museum collections as resources. Grounded in fieldwork set among networks of Indian hobbyists in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, and the Czech Republic, this ethnography analyzes this contemporary practice of serious leisure with respect to the general human desire for play, metaphor, and allusion. It provides insights into the increasing popularity of reenactment practices as they relate to a deeper understanding of human perception, imagination, and creativity.

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