



Random Acts of Culture: Reclaiming Art and Community in the 21st Century

Clarke Mackey

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In our society, cultural activity - or “the arts” - usually refers to the high culture of the elites and popular mass culture. Clarke Mackey argues for a third category that is as old as human society itself but seldom discussed: *vernacular culture*.

Vernacular culture comprises all those creative, non-instrumental activities that people engage in daily, activities that provide meaning in life: conversations between friends, social gatherings and rituals, play and participatory sports, informal storytelling, musical jam sessions, cooking and gardening, homemade architecture, and street festivals. In this lively and eclectic discussion, Mackey maintains that practising and celebrating such activities at the expense of passive, consumer culture have far-reaching benefits. Mackey further examines how literacy, imperialism, industrialization and electronic technologies have produced a culture of spectatorship, apathy and powerlessness.

This is a timely, considered, and provocative response to the popularity of amateur, participatory, and do-it-yourself culture available on the internet.

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