

HAB201 & HAB301 OBJECT LESSONS: EXPLORING MATERIAL CULTURE 4-22 January 2010



Dance cap made of toucan feathers by the Jivaro people of Ecuador. Held in the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

All peoples live their lives within worlds of objects that they have made, use or to which they attribute meaning. These objects affect our relations with one another and with our environments, express our beliefs, reflect our identities, and often represent the pinnacle of human achievement. This summer school unit examines this tangible aspect of culture and its implications.

Can culture be material?

Why is the context in which an object occurs so important?

How do material cultures vary among peoples? Were all historically known Indigenous Australian material cultures essentially similar?

How does material culture figure in the relationship between coloniser and colonised?

Is cultural heritage material culture, and if so, what implications does this have?

What is art? Do all peoples have art?

What can we learn from the study of objects? How can we do it?

What social and historical significance do art galleries and museums have?

How does our material culture affect us, or does it?

Further information

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