

Performing the Past

A Study of Israeli Settlement Museums

A nostalgic interest in the past is a well-recognized feature of fast-changing, contemporary societies. It finds its expression in a variety of history-making practices of which the establishment of local heritage museums is a major manifestation in many parts of the world today. Katriel develops a communication-centered perspective on the study of heritage museums and -- by extension -- other tourist sites, highlighting the role of discourse in these institutionalized, yet vernacular contexts of cultural production, social legitimation, and identity formation. Descriptive and critical in orientation, this book combines a close analysis of museum discourse with an exploration of such larger issues as: * the socio-cultural role of museums as arenas for the production of collective memory, * the ideological and performative constraints that shape museum presentations, * the interfacing of verbal and visual codes of communication in the context of material displays, * the dialectical interplay of the local and the global in contemporary life, and * the interpenetration of the personal and the communal in vernacular processes of narrative production. Of interest to scholars in communication, linguistics, anthropology, history, museum studies, tourism, intercultural communication, middle eastern studies, or those with interests in narratives, material culture, and ethnography.

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