

Relics, Remnants, and Religion: An Undergraduate Journal in Religious Studies

Volume 2 | Issue 1

Article 5

12-12-2016

Foreword to Journal Art

Emily Beth Santor

University of Puget Sound, esantor@pugetsound.edu

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Recommended Citation

Santor, Emily Beth (2016) "Foreword to Journal Art," *Relics, Remnants, and Religion: An Undergraduate Journal in Religious Studies*: Vol. 2 : Iss. 1 , Article 5.

Available at: <https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/relics/vol2/iss1/5>

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To some, it may seem a bit unclear why apparently secular art has been included in a “religion” journal. The first thing to understand is that ‘religion’ itself is a highly subjective term. Scholars throughout the ages have struggled to define what does and does not count as ‘religious’. Ideas or systems that some may consider completely secular, such as science or capitalism, actually share many of the patterns and practices exhibited by traditionally religious institutions like Buddhism and Christianity (as I write, the radio is ironically playing a song including the repeated lyric “love is my religion”). Art is no different. Think of art as a physical manifestation of the experience of the human soul. Art is pure expression; it is ideology and feeling embodied in a visual medium. Art, like the written word, can communicate concepts, political theory, and complex emotion. Whether for its intellectual or aesthetic value, art will always hold a significant place in the academic discourse of religion.

--Emily Santor