

## **The Artist Knows Best: The De-Professionalism of a Profession [Abstract]**

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The traveling art exhibit *Jimmie Durham: At the Center of the World* (2017–2018) demonstrated three powerful art world tendencies: the use of fraud as an artistic register, the assertion of the artist as authority, and the decontextualization of the arts as an object-centered analysis. These three approaches are congruent with capitalism and the private market, while simultaneously negating Indigenous values of community-based knowledges that operate largely outside the commercial sphere. An analysis of these competing art world values reveals the complicity of public museums with private gain and not education, their stated mission. Ethnic fraud demonstrates how art institutions and their staff employ “selective worth” as a means to cloak the arbitrary exertion of power and simultaneous rejection of Indigenous studies as academic discipline built on the value of tribal sovereignty. Serving as a backdrop for these conversations are a discussion of the history of Native approaches to museology from the early tribal museum era forward and an examination of current “reformist” and “radical” approaches to theorizing Native arts.

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