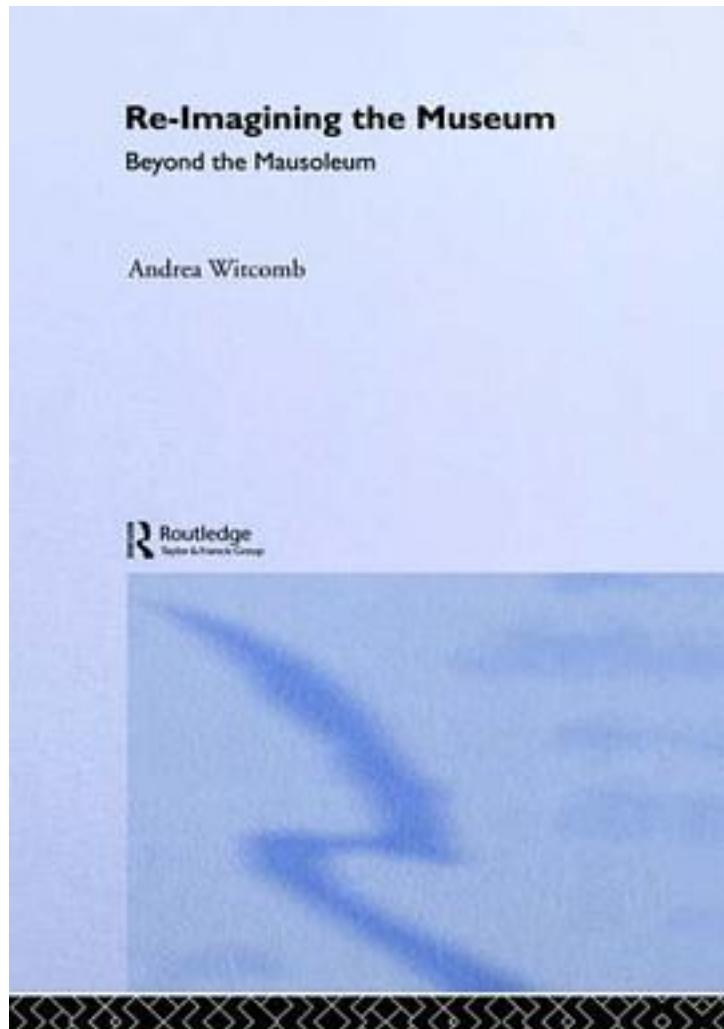


Re-Imagining the Museum



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Re-Imagining the Museum: Beyond the Mausoleum presents new interpretations of

museum history and contemporary museum practices through a range of case studies and by engaging with contemporary theoretical approaches to thinking about museums. In recent years, museums have faced increasing demands for a popular mode of address. Some commentators have aligned themselves with such demands, representing museums as 'mausoleums' weighed down by the past and captive to the interests of elites. Others argue that contemporary museums have broken with the past to become open, democratic institutions. Andrea Witcomb rejects both positions, arguing that museums have a long history of engaging with popular culture and addressing a variety of audiences. Rather than belonging clearly to one or other side, they have been key mediators between high and popular culture and between governmental and other discourses. Witcomb traces this function, both past and present, by looking at relations between museums and other areas of public culture, particularly the media. The book analyses links between museums and the media, looks at the role of museums in modern and postmodern cities and discusses the effects on museums of contemporary cultural policies. Interdisciplinary in approach, the book engages with a variety of contemporary commentators on museums from the UK, North America and Australia. The case studies used will be of interest to a wide audience; the Australian examples in particular provide much-needed exposure of Australian museum practices, presented in a way that will be relevant to an international readership.

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