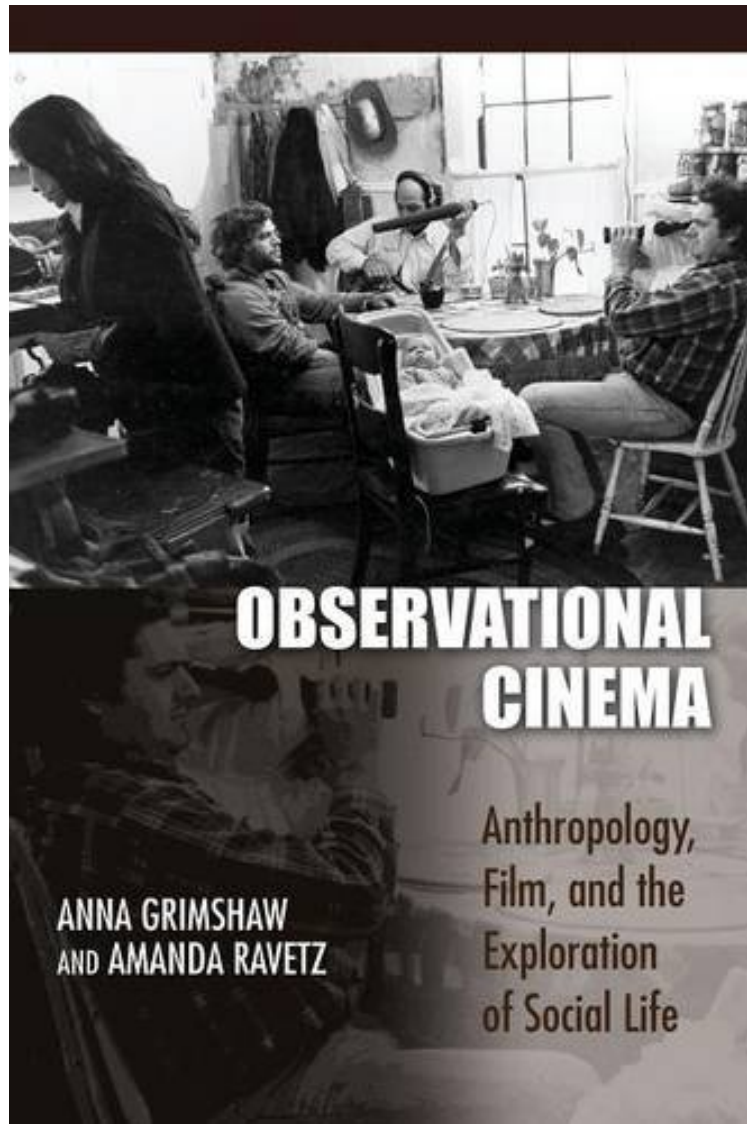


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Observational Cinema: Anthropology, Film, and the Exploration of Social Life

Anna Grimshaw, Amanda Ravetz
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Once hailed as a radical breakthrough in documentary and ethnographic filmmaking, observational cinema has been criticized for a supposedly detached camera that objectifies and dehumanizes the subjects of its gaze. Anna Grimshaw and Amanda Ravetz provide the first critical history and in-depth appraisal of this movement, examining key works, filmmakers, and theorists, from Andr Bazin and the Italian neorealists, to American documentary films of the 1960s, to extended discussions of the ethnographic films of Herb Di Gioia, David Hancock, and David MacDougall. They make a new case for the importance of observational work in an emerging experimental anthropology, arguing that this medium exemplifies a non-textual anthropology that is both analytically rigorous and epistemologically challenging.

Arguing from the works of Andr Bazin, Colin Young, Herb Di Gioia, and others, the authors make a case for continuous long shots, respectful engagement with subjects, a humanistic perspective that values the quotidian of people's lives, and a reluctance to indulge in pre-information about the subject matter of films' targeted topics. . . . Recommended.July 2010 (Choice)Observational Cinema is a fascinating and much-needed study of an important body of work. (American Ethnologist)Grimshaw and Ravetz offer an appealing study of the observational cinematic method in ethnographic research. XVI, No. 3, 2010 (Anthropological Notebooks) Grimshaw and Ravetz not only demonstrate felicitous linkages between visual and social anthropology, which is highly welcomed, but between anthropological gazes and artistic visions. We need more of these kinds of expanded multidisciplinary works for they break new ground and expand the space of imagination. (Paul Stoller author of *The Power of the Between: An Anthropological Odyssey*)About the AuthorAnna Grimshaw is Associate Professor in the Graduate Institute of the Liberal Arts, Emory University. She is author of *Servants of the Buddha* and *The Ethnographers Eye: Ways of Seeing in Modern Anthropology*. Amanda Ravetz is Research Fellow at Manchester Institute for Research and Innovation in Art and Design, Manchester Metropolitan University.