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Propositions.

1. There are specific attitudes to the experience of Being and the construction of self in the Maya area, which are different from European philosophies
2. Experts from Santa Elena show that the fluidity of life-force affects Being, with the result that materials have animate properties.
3. Due to the fact that creative material culture can elicit an existential response, understanding culturally specific conceptions of personhood and materiality among the Maya is fundamental to understanding the “art” of that area.
4. Perhaps because of the lack of information readily accessible to Western academics, the interpretation of “art” from the Maya area hasn’t been as complex and cumulative as the European art historical discussion.
5. Eurocentric pre-conceptions on Being and materials can hinder a culturally appropriate assessment of Maya art.
6. An epistemology of studies of the Maya area require us to think about what the aim of these studies is; who these studies are directed towards.
7. People in the Maya area are experts in the philosophies that are fundamental to understanding production and reception of art works.
8. Turning to Maya experts not only helps in the interpretation of Maya art, but it makes academic studies in the field relevant.
9. People in Santa Elena use culturally specific narratives and philosophies to negotiate and direct community identity.
10. It is not only through ethnographic accounts of art production that we can glean useful information to apply to ancient art analysis
11. Para-Protestant sects in Southern Mexico are often associated with a distancing from ancestral beliefs and practices.
12. Considering the creativity and depth of knowledge of the people in Santa Elena, it would be interesting to conduct projects with the community that promote respect for ancestral beliefs and practices and build a space for community introspection. These spaces might raise questions concerning the uses of ancestral knowledge and ways to safeguard it.