

Igor Kopytoff [1930-2013]

Date : August 25, 2013

A number of prominent anthropologists have passed away in recent weeks, perhaps most notably, George W. Stocking [July 13th, aged 85], Keith Basso [Aug. 4th, aged 73] and [Igor Kopytoff](#) on August 9th.

With his major contribution 'The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process', in Arjun Appadurai's groundbreaking *The Social Life of Things* (CUP, 1986) Kopytoff in particular deserves special recognition on this blog. Based at the University of Pennsylvania for over 50 years, his field research as an Africanist was truly wide ranging, with interests in economic anthropology, cultural property, religion and political culture. He was a Consulting Curator in the African Section of the University's Museum.

Amongst his numerous achievements and accolades, he acted as a Consultant to President Kennedy's Task Force on the Congo in 1961; was Associate Editor of *American Anthropologist* from 1966-70; and was Visiting Professor at the University of Montreal over the year 1983-84.

An obituary by Allison Steele has appeared in the online digital newspaper [Philly.com](#).