

COLLECTING

AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Susan M. Pierce, *ON COLLECTING An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition*. Routledge, London, 1995.

A detailed exploration of what it means to collect, written by a (now retired) British academic in Museum Studies.

2. Susan M. Pierce, *COLLECTING IN CONTEMPORARY PRACTICE*. Sage Publications, London, 1998.

Discussion and conclusions of The Contemporary Collecting in Britain Survey, a large 1990's study which showed both the widespread occurrence and the normality of collecting.

3. Werner Muensterberger, *COLLECTING: AN UNRULY PASSION Psychological Perspectives*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1994.

Written by a psychoanalyst, and exploring the [alleged] psychopathology of all collecting, this is a book I despised and yet found entertaining.

4. William Davies King, *COLLECTIONS OF NOTHING*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2008.

An exploration of collecting practice, and a meditation on the psychopathology some people believe is found toward the end of its bell-curve.

5. Philipp Blom, *TO HAVE AND TO HOLD. AN INTIMATE HISTORY OF COLLECTORS AND COLLECTING*. The Overlook Press, New York, 2003.

A good history, with comments on psychology, and with a good bibliography.

6. Lawrence Wechsler, *MR. WILSON'S CABINET OF WONDER*. Pantheon, New York, 1995.

A discussion of the genesis and nature of The Museum of Jurassic Technology, in Los Angeles. Masquerading as a museum, this very complex, long-lived piece of performance art explores, among many things, the interface between collecting and art.

7. Orhan Pamuk, *THE MUSEUM OF INNOCENCE* (translated by Maureen Freely). Knopf, New York, 2009.

Orhan Pamuk, *THE INNOCENCE OF OBJECTS* (translated by Ekin Oklap). Abrams, New York, 2012.

Together, these two books represent a striking work of art by this Turkish winner of the 2006 Nobel prize for literature. The first is a novel in which both collecting and the specific objects collected play a crucial, central role. The second is the catalogue of the actual, nonfictional museum in Istanbul opened by Pamuk to display the physical objects associated with the novel's characters and stories. The objects were collected and the museum was planned as the novel was written. This work raises many questions about and offers many insights into the nature of collecting.

8. Walter Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library" (essay), in *ILLUMINATIONS Essays and Reflections*. (Translated by Harry Zorn). Harcourt Brace & World, Inc., New York, 1968.

Some insightful comments on collecting.

9. Amanda Petrusich, DO NOT SELL AT ANY PRICE. THE WILD, OBSESSIVE HUNT FOR THE WORLD'S RAREST 78 RPM RECORDS. Scribner, New York, 2014.
Details of one narrow collecting area, but with some useful general comments.
10. Tibor Fischer, THE COLLECTOR COLLECTOR. Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1997. This fun novel, set in 1990s London, is narrated by a sentient, shape-shifting, thousands-of-years-old bowl, who keeps detailed records and notes about its hundreds of past owners.
11. John Updike, "The Furniture". This lovely, short poem presents an animist view of objects, and speculates about their relationship to us.
12. Salman Akhtar, OBJECTS OF OUR DESIRE. EXPLORING OUR INTIMATE CONNECTIONS WITH THE THINGS AROUND US. Harmony Books, New York, 2005.
An idiosyncratic take on our relationship to objects, with some insights about collecting and its psychology.
13. David Searcy, "Letter of Recommendation: The Beekeeper Joke". The New York Times Magazine, 2/14/16. A presentation and discussion of "the world's funniest joke", not to be missed. It celebrates the transformative power of collecting and other hobbies, while keeping them in perspective.

https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/14/magazine/letter-of-recommendation-the-beekeeper-joke.html?_r=0

HOARDING AND COLLECTING

14. David F. Tolin, Randy O. Frost, and Gail Steketee, *BURIED IN TREASURES: Help for Compulsive Acquiring, Saving, and Hoarding*. Oxford University Press, New York, 2007.

Tolin claims that, at the extreme, collecting shares a border with hoarding. Though the two are fundamentally different, the pathology at the edge may shed some light on the nature of the normal range.

15. Randy O. Frost and Gail Steketee. *STUFF: Compulsive Hoarding and the Meaning of Things*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, New York, 2010.

A more detailed and excellent look at hoarding, including a fine short discussion of collecting.

16. Robin Zasio, *THE HOARDER IN YOU*. Rodale Books, New York, 2011.

A self-help discussion of hoarding diagnosis and therapy, and hoarding's relationship to a continuum of "normal" behaviors. Includes a short but excellent and useful discussion of how hoarding differs from collecting and collecting from accumulating.

17. David Mataix-Cols, Ph.D., "Hoarding Disorder". *New England Journal of Medicine* Volume 370 #21, May 22, 2014, pages 2023-2030.

A good medical-journal summary.

18. A. Ashley E. Nordsletten and David Mataix-Cols, “Hoarding versus Collecting: Where Does Pathology Diverge From Play?”. *Clinical Psychology Review* 32 (2012) pp. 165-176.

B. Ashley E. Nordsletten, Lorena Fernandex de la Cruz, Danielle Billotti, and David Mataix-Cols, “Finders Keepers: The Features Differentiating Hoarding Disorder From Normative Collecting.” *Comprehensive Psychiatry* 54 (2013) pp. 229-237.

These linked articles discuss the clear difference between collecting and hoarding, key aspects of collecting, and the overall normality of collectors.

Two items found since the publication of #25:

Jon Day, "Hoardiculture". *London Review of Books* Volume 44 #17 (September 8, 2022).

<https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v44/n17/jon-day/diary>

International OCD Foundation's Hoarding Center(UK),
Clutter Images Rating System.

<https://hoardingdisordersuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/clutter-image-ratings.pdf>

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES THAT DESCRIBE SELECTIONS OF COLLECTORS, THEIR COLLECTIONS, AND THEIR COLLECTING PRACTICE:

19. Mitch Tuchman and Peter Brenner, *MAGNIFICENT OBSESSIONS*
Twenty Remarkable Collectors in Pursuit of Their Dreams.
Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 1994.

20. Susanna Johnston and Tim Beddow, *COLLECTING: The Passionate Pastime*. Harper & Row, New York, 1986.

Includes Stanley Shoop's *INSOLT* collection ("I've Never Seen One Like That").

21. Marilyn Gelfman Karp, *IN FLAGRANTE COLLECTO* (caught in the act of collecting). Abrams, New York, 2006.

By far the best-ever title for a book about collecting, and a wonderful exploration of collections of everyday objects.

22. *Aperture*, number 124, summer 1991.

This issue of *Aperture* (a specialty magazine of photography) describes the photograph collections of six people, and includes interviews. It gave me insight into the creative nature of collecting.

BULLETIN OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF ARMS COLLECTORS

23. Herman P. Dean, "The Philosophy of Collecting". *Bulletin of the American Society of Arms Collectors* #11, Spring 1965, pages 10-16.

A good presentation of some of the basic reasons why people collect.

<https://americansocietyofarmscollectors.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/1965-B11-The-Philosophy-Of-Collecting.pdf>

24. Matthew Schneiderman, "Collecting". *Bulletin of the American Society of Arms Collectors* #117, Spring 2018, pages 44-53.

An insightful, well-researched, and highly entertaining exploration of the nature of collecting.

<https://americansocietyofarmscollectors.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/2018-B117-Collecting.pdf>

25. Craig & Mary Ann Ross, “Firing an Imagination”. Bulletin of the American Society of Arms Collectors #118, Fall 2018, pages 55-61.

An outstanding, highly personal revelation of a couple’s collecting history and practice, emphasizing the importance of friends, colleagues, and mentors in the world of collecting.

<https://americansocietyofarmscollectors.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Firing-and-imagination-Collecting-Ross-vol-118-1.pdf>

WORKS FOUND SINCE PUBLICATION OF #25.

26. SIGNIFICANCE 2.0 a guide to assessing the significance of collections. Roslyn Russell and Kylie Winkworth, Collections Council of Australia, Ltd., 2009.

https://www.arts.gov.au/sites/default/files/significance-2.0.pdf?acsf_files_redirect#:~:text=Significance%202.0%20helps%20the%20Collections%20Council%20to%20achieve,wide%20range%20of%20approaches%20to%20collections%20that%20derive

Though created by and primarily for institutions, it has some useful ideas and discussion for individual collectors.

27. The School of Life, WHY WE HATE CHEAP THINGS. London, 2017.

In addition to a brief history of the pineapple, this small book includes a useful discussion of the transubstantiation of objects.

28. Jason Baldwin, “A Good Eye A Recipe to [sic] Collecting”. Arms Heritage Magazine, Volume 3 # 6 (December 2013), pages 33-37.

A good discussion of connoisseurship and the evaluation of collectible objects.

29. Leanne Shapton, *IMPORTANT ARTIFACTS AND PERSONAL PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF LENORE DOOLAN AND HAROLD MORRIS, INCLUDING BOOKS, STREET FASHION, AND JEWELRY*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, New York, 2009.

A highly unusual graphic novel (using photos with text) documenting the arc of a relationship through a (fictional) couple's objects. The epigraph, from Novalis: "We seek the absolute everywhere, and only ever find things."

30. James Whitehouse, "Why Collect?" *Guns Review* Volume 2 #8 (October 1962), pages 26-27, 37.

I haven't read this--I list it for completeness and future reference.

Matthew Schneiderman
July 2025.
schneiderman615@gmail.com

