



Museums and the Future of Collecting


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Collecting is a key function of museums. Its apparent simplicity belies a complexity of questions and issues which make all collecting imprecise and unrepresentative. This book exposes the many meanings of collections, the different perspectives taken by different cultures, and the institutional response to the collecting problem. One major concern is omission, whether this be determined by politics, professional ethics, the law or social agenda. How did curators collect during the war in Croatia? What were the problems of trying to collect the 'old' South Africa when the new one was born? Can museums collect from groups which seem to 'deviate' from society's norms? How has the function of museums affected the practices of international trade? Can museums collect successfully if collecting agenda are being set externally? Museums and the Future of Collecting encourages museums to move away from the collecting of isolated tokens; to move beyond the collecting policy and to understand more clearly the intellectual function of what they do. Here examples are given from Australia, Sweden, Canada, Spain, Britain and Croatia which provide this intellectual understanding and many practical tools for evaluating a future collecting strategy.

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