

Collection Design



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著者:Adam Lindemann

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The book tackles these issues by concentrating its efforts on furniture design in particular. The 32 autobiographies are split up into 5 different user-perspectives of the

design collection industry that include:

- The Designer
- The Collector
- The Dealer
- The Tastemaker, and
- The Auction House Expert

These 5 perspectives give a holistic insight into the industry and reveal the conflicting interests, juxtapositions, challenges and rivalries these industry roles have with one another. The stories featured throughout the autobiographies are insightful and offer genuine information and advice to the reader. Because of this autobiographical collation there is a real free-flowing nature to each story and a sense of unpredictability as to what learning each professional is trying to extract. Each of these mini chapters contains a comprehensively written memoir followed by some beautiful design photographs.

‘Collecting Design’ makes a bad mistake by not outlining well in its foreword, introduction or blurb what the book sets out to achieve. ‘Collecting Design’ tends to ask questions and seeks opinions rather than attempting to tackle these issues head on in a scholarly manner. However one must recognise that many of these issues are opinionated in nature; conjectures one might say, just like how on one of my favorite TV shows, ‘Antiques Roadshow’, one evaluator can have a drastically different appraisal to another. But even after reading the book, all 300 pages long and intensively worded, I still am not quite sure who this book is for. Is it for design collectors themselves to become better collectors? Is it for people considering getting into the marketplace? Is it for designers to try to make more memorable design pieces? Or is it for people who just have a general interest in fine design and enjoy casual antique/artefact collecting? I am really not sure, but one could conclude that all these readers could reap some value from ‘Collecting Design’. The book is incredibly niche however. It is rare enough that we see industrial design books, yet alone one about industrial design collecting, so it could be said that the book has a very narrow audience. You will leave this book filled with roughly 1000 years of wisdom and knowledge of design collection and despite it being a fascinating and enjoyable journey, like me, you will probably struggle to find any practical avenue of expressing and trialing these new-found understandings.

Despite this, ‘Collecting Design’ is well written, beautifully presented, well structured and features hundreds of pieces that I certainly haven’t had the pleasure of viewing before, making it a great Christmas read.

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