### **Contents**

5

#### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Objects beyond a utilitarian context; Authenticity and new identities

13

### **Chapter 2: Multiple Motivations of Collectors**

Reductionist tendencies in psychological analyses; Belittling collectors' motives; Conspicuous consumption of a leisure class

31

# Chapter 3: Collecting as an Elite Preoccupation

Vulgar versus cultivated leisure; Objects withdrawn from economic circuits; Curiosity about nature and culture; Economic boom and the explosion of art works

43

### Chapter 4: Maybe both Pleasure and Work

Production and reproduction of texts; Books as a means to an end; The collector, not the painter; Raw meat if not expressed in art; Like the study of an archeologist; Liberation from the drudgery of usefulness; Simple life and obvious motives

67

## Chapter 5: Time, Labor and Leisure

Time available for consumption; Typically male leisure pastimes; Work, hobbies and collecting

81

# Chapter 6: Public Houses of the Muses

Private and public collections; An industrialist's museum of Asian arts; Assistant to the founder of American anthropology; The transition from artifact to art; A combination of private and public collecting; A dealer in the British collecting scene; Historical and cultural discourse on authenticity

105

# **Chapter 7: Contemporary Art Markets**

An American fine art market; Art dealers, artists and collectors; Tribal art on the market; Some visitors are scared of my pieces; Profiles of tribal art collectors

125

### Chapter 8: A Polynesian Art Traffic Network

Local art dealers; Inventory of original Polynesian art; A Polynesian paddle at auction

#### 137

#### Chapter 9: Tricky Business at the Auction

The auction as social process; How the auction works; The highest bidder; The role of the auction catalogue; Tournaments of value and deception; On reasonable profits

#### 161

### Chapter 10: Old papers and Bottles of Wine

Transmission of old family documents; Dumps, archives, and accidental discoveries; The myth of the big find

#### 173

### Chapter 11: A Gendered Collecting Field

Industrial products as significant tokens of the past; The many faces of philately; Gender and the model of science; Stamps and the art metaphor; Social status and the cognitive drive; The rationale of economic investment; Less strict rules and quicker recognition

#### 199

#### **Chapter 12: The Smallest of Artifacts**

Origins of philately: two competing versions; The historical precedence of fiscal stamps over postage stamps; Embodiments of an encyclopedic ideal; Examples of contemporary philatelic collectors; A democratized form of collecting

#### 219

### Chapter 13: A World of Amateur Traders

An anthropology of underground economies; Case studies of amateur dealers; The practical organization of amateur trade; The intricacies of selling at bourses; The value of collections; What moves amateur traders; Professionalization in amateurism; A model of production and business; Differences between professional and amateur dealers

#### 253

### Chapter 14: Paintings in Wood and Leaves

Globalization and the bent for the exotic; Signs of a checkered life; Cultural backgrounds of bonsai in China; Japanese and Vietnamese connections; Transmission from the Orient to the West; An olive tree from Tuscany; Creating one's own; Financial adventures

#### 281

#### **Chapter 15: Conclusion**

The collector as artist; A matter of metaphors; Unequal access to knowledge and markets

289 Bibliography

> 317 Index