



Sex Collectors: The Secret World of Consumers, Connoisseurs, Curators, Creators, Dealers, Bibliographers, and Accumulators of "Erotica"

Geoff Nicholson

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Though you might not encounter the subject in *Artforum* or stumble across it at Sotheby's, the thriving business of erotica is a mixture of sophistication and seduction, an underground world of eccentric artists and serious collectors.

In *Sex Collectors*, Geoff Nicholson hunts down an assortment of these obsessives around the world. From the Florida grandma with five million dollars' worth of sexual collectibles to Third Eye Blind's manager, who owns more than eighty thousand men's magazines, Nicholson celebrates these collectors and the occasionally beautiful, frequently bizarre, and always fascinating objects they have amassed.

He accompanies Linda Lovelace, the star of *Deep Throat*, as she is taken on a tour of a collection devoted to her. Days spent in the Kinsey archives reveal the cultural artifacts resulting from the sexual awakening of public America, as well as boxes with labels such as "Phallus with Agricultural Tools" and "Scarf Trick when Folded." Nicholson journeys to Germany to visit with the legendary Karl-Ludwig Leonhardt, sex collector extraordinaire of first edition volumes such as *Flagellation pour couples pervers* and *Tender Bottoms*, erotic Picassos, and notes handwritten by the Marquis de Sade.

Throughout his exploration of some of the wildest collections in the world, Nicholson's discussion of collecting as an expression of self and psychology goes hand in hand with his gleeful discovery of the seventh giant phallus used in Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*, Hitler's creepily erotic personalized bookplate, and a woman who has a plaster cast of Jimi Hendrix's penis. *Sex Collectors* is a winning story of one man's attempt to collect collectors, to reveal the neuroses that drive some people to collect, and to have good, dirty, high-minded fun while doing it.

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