

promoting collections and their use. At the same time, she acknowledges that the establishment of a digitization program requires an organization to shift resources and staff, embrace new tools and skills, change its notions of ownership and access, as well as planning for a possible drop in user visits. Cullingford concludes that the benefits of a digitization program (access, use, and visibility) far exceed any potential disruptions to the organization's operations.

While acknowledging that the current economic and political environment has librarians "doing more with less," Alison Cullingford argues that the ultimate success of special collections rests on the willingness of professionals to try new ideas and their ability to adapt to changing circumstances. The 2017 second edition of *The Special Collections Handbook* offers the reader an engaging, informative, and strategic road map to overseeing and promoting unique and distinctive collections. This book is an essential read for special collections professionals and library administrators, as well as graduate students who are just entering the field.—Keith Phelan Gorman, *The University of North Carolina at Greensboro*

**Freda Matassa.** *Valuing Your Collection*. London: Facet Publishing, 2017. 224p. Soft-cover, £59.95 (ISBN 978-1-78330-187-4).

Following her previous publications, *Museum Collections Management* and *Organizing Exhibitions*, Matassa here presents a straightforward guide to approaching the often tricky but necessary valuation of various materials housed in museums, libraries, and archives. As a past head of collections management at the Tate Galleries and the current director of the art consultancy firm Matassa Toffolo, Matassa began this work in 2011 at the request of the European Commission's Workplan for Culture. The request followed her report (coauthored with Dr. Cornelia Dümke) entitled *Valuation of Works of Art for Lending and Borrowing Purposes*, which exposed high insurance costs as a major hurdle to collection loans and uncovered a lack of best practices for training curators that would enable them to value their collections. This work begins solving the problem of establishing value in both public and private institutions, through an example-filled exploration of issues and possible solutions.

Written chiefly through the perspective of a curator working in a British fine art museum, Matassa begins with a general discussion of the importance of valuation before presenting chapters that address significant topics such as the difficulties of properly valuing material; important laws and ethical considerations; general insurance suggestions; possible alternatives to traditional full coverage insurance; situations that might require a value and the importance of a valuation policy; possible approaches to valuing an entire collection; and considerations for valuing a given object. Following this are numerous case studies that explore relevant frameworks for assigning values to specific collection types, providing commentary

from experts as well as a sample valuation form for each type. There are also three appendices covering applicable U.K. government programs, a brief overview of the previously mentioned report *Valuation of Works of Art for Lending and Borrowing Purposes*, a detailed glossary of terms, and a bibliography and index.

Among the strongest aspects of the work are the significant contributions from experts in related fields. While Matassa takes sole credit as author, she did a superb job soliciting advice to make this book applicable for more than just fine art curators. In addition to the case studies, short summaries of valuation policies from influential British and Scottish foundations, libraries, museums, trusts, and archives are sprinkled throughout the text, somewhat at random, to give readers an idea how Matassa's general suggestions can be transformed into actual practice by professionals in affiliated fields. The library and archives summaries are especially valuable, as there appears to be no U.S. equivalent of this work written for special collections professionals, only helpful guides designed for new collectors, such as RBMS's *Your Old Books*, or online suggestions for navigating the usual databases. Some of this work's more specific details will not be applicable to American audiences, especially the chapter detailing the various U.K. laws that can impact or shape valuation practices, but the overall sentiment and approach will be helpful for those learning valuation or managing those who do.

If you want easy answers or shortcuts for generating monetary values of items within your collection, this is not the book for you; but it would be ideal for one struggling to know where to start in a special collections environment with a variety of holdings that may include objects in addition to the expected rare books and archives.—Colleen Barrett, *Philadelphia Rare Books & Manuscripts Company*

**David Thomas, Simon Fowler, and Valerie Johnson.** *The Silence of the Archive.*

Chicago: ALA Neal-Schuman, 2017. 187p. Softcover, \$76.00 (ISBN 978-0-8389-1640-7).

*The Silence of the Archive* is a deceptively slim volume, for within its covers the reader discovers a wide-ranging, thought-provoking conversation that brings together fascinating examples and anecdotes from archival history and a variety of perspectives and insightful commentary, all arranged in a thematic exploration of the silences or absences in archives. The result is a timely contribution that succeeds in asking the big questions so necessary for the survival of archives in today's world and bridging the gap in the archival literature between practical manuals and the contributions of archival theorists, historians, cultural theorists, and others about the archival endeavor. In considering what archives are *not*, the authors ironically bring us much closer to a grounded holistic understanding of what archives *are*, and what the role of archivists is, or should be.