


Cabinet of Curiosities

Mark Dion and the University as Installation

COLLEEN J. SHEEHY






Cabinet of Curiosities

Cabinet of

Curiosities

Mark Dion and the University as Installation

COLLEEN J. SHEEHY, EDITOR

Published in Cooperation with the Weisman Art Museum UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PRESS MINNEAPOLIS | LONDON

Assistance for the publication of this book was provided by the B. J. O. Nordfeldt Fund for American Art.

Unless otherwise credited, photographs are by Robert Fogt and are reproduced by permission of the Weisman Art Museum.

PUBLISHED BY THE
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PRESS

111 Third Avenue South, Suite 290
Minneapolis, MN 55401-2520
www.upress.umn.edu

Printed in Canada on acid-free paper

The University of Minnesota is an equal-opportunity educator and employer.

12 11 10 09 08 07 06

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress
Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Dion, Mark, 1961–

Cabinet of curiosities : Mark Dion and the university as installation / Colleen J. Sheehy, editor.

p. cm.

Catalog of an exhibition "Mark Dion: Cabinet of Curiosities" at the Weisman Art Museum from Feb. 24–May 27, 2001.

ISBN-13: 978-0-8166-4470-4 (pb : alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 0-8166-4470-5 (pb : alk. paper)

1. Dion, Mark, 1961—Exhibitions.
2. Cabinets of curiosities—Exhibitions.
3. Site-specific installations (Art)—Minnesota—Minneapolis—Exhibitions.
4. Museum techniques—Exhibitions.
5. University of Minnesota—Exhibitions. I. Sheehy, Colleen Josephine. II. Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum. III. Title.

N6537.D54A4 2006

709.2—dc22
2006028171

Plates from *Mark Dion: Cabinet of Curiosities* begin after page 51.

LYNDEL KING

Preface

IS MARK DION A BRILLIANT CURATOR, innovative artist, exceptional teacher—or perhaps all of the above? The *Cabinet of Curiosities* he presented at the Weisman Art Museum in 2001 confirmed that he, indeed, fits all of those descriptions. Everyone at the Weisman and all the students who participated in the class that created this exhibition were inspired by his endless curiosity about the world, his persistent questioning of assumptions, and his gift for making connections when most people saw none. And we appreciated and benefited from his patience, wisdom, and good humor.

Colleen J. Sheehy, the director of education at the Weisman, matches Dion in inventiveness and curiosity. With her usual prodigious initiative, she proposed to bring Dion to the Weisman and convinced us all that it was a good idea. Working with Mark Dion was an enormously satisfying experience, and we are glad she was so persuasive. Dion's *Cabinet of Curiosities* was an adventure that led to places we never knew existed here at the University of Minnesota.

Dion's project at the Weisman involved collaborating with Sheehy and students to research and present an exhibition based on the *Cabinet of Curiosities* exhibit he had done at the Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State University in 1997. Five graduate students and three undergraduate seniors, including majors in art history, art, theater, library science, liberal studies, and anthropology, investigated collections and read and discussed Dion's work, the history of museums, and the history of the cabinets of curiosity as forerunners to museums.

Organizing thematic exhibitions with students and faculty is standard fare at the Weisman, but this project combined the exhibition experience with a critical look at museums and their history and meaning. Dion employs the methods of archaeology and of museums to create something that is not quite archaeology or museum, and that raises basic questions: What is a museum? Why is it a museum?

The *Cabinet of Curiosities* project was in one sense quite straightforward and built on tasks typical for an academic class—reading, followed by critical discussion and writing. However, the reading, writing, and discussion were not abstract. They had real consequences. Reading about the history of museums and about their beginnings in these cabinets of curiosity combined with curatorial work clearly showed how the foundation in these collections underpins museums today.

The first step in our project was to discover what collections actually existed on campus. A year before the class began, a Weisman intern, Tonia Zehrer, documented more than fifty different university collections. Some have been held by the university for some time, such as the Herbarium with its plant collections and the Insect Collection. Others were distinct subsections in the Special Collections area of the library, such as the Givens Collection of African American Literature. Some were holdings contained within departments, such as the Rocks and Minerals Collection in the Department of Geology and Geophysics. Others were in more formally organized museums, such as the Bell Museum of Natural History, the Goldstein Museum of Design, and, of course, the Weisman Art Museum.

I would like to acknowledge all the curators of collections at the university who gave endless time and expertise to Dion, Weisman staff, and the students. These curators, some of whom had no regular exhibit space, were eager for their specialized collections to be shown to the public in a meaningful way. They participated fully as partners in the research, teaching, and excitement of the project. We are grateful to them as colleagues and as new friends with whom we continue to work.

The project required significant involvement of museum staff. The museum's registrar, Karen Duncan, helped the students make professional loan requests and handled the transfer of hundreds of unusual objects to the Weisman for use in the exhibition. Mark Kramer, exhibition coordinator, oversaw the installation of the largest exhibition in terms of number of objects yet presented at the Weisman Art Museum. Both earned our special gratitude for their patience and equanimity. Students worked with our art crew to transport all 701 objects to the museum and completed condition reports. Weisman staff and curators of each collection instructed students in safe handling methods. As always, the Weisman staff performed professionally and far beyond the basic responsibilities of their jobs.

This project exemplifies many aspects of the Weisman Art Museum's mission. In an innovative art project, it brought an extraordinary contemporary artist here for meaningful collaboration with university students, faculty, and staff. The students gained invaluable hands-on experience in research, curatorial work, and art practice, very much in keeping with the workshop quality we try to cultivate at the Weisman. The curatorial group unearthed many little-known treasures of the university in collections that underline the scholarly quest for new knowledge. The final installation shared University of Minnesota resources with campus and community audiences and did so in a captivating display. We are pleased that we can document this entire creative process so thoroughly in this fine publication.

I acknowledge and thank all the students and faculty whose essays are in this book, for their contributions to the museum and to this volume. We are grateful to Doug Armato, director; Todd Orjala, acquisitions editor; and Laura Westlund, managing editor, at the University of Minnesota Press for their commitment to this book, allowing a much wider audience access to the work of the Weisman, the students, and the University of Minnesota.

Finally, special tribute to Mark Dion and Colleen J. Sheehy, true co-conspirators! You have brought a sense of curiosity and wonder to us all.

Lyndel King is director and chief curator of the Weisman Art Museum at the University of Minnesota.

Acknowledgments

THE EXHIBITION *Mark Dion: Cabinet of Curiosities* and this resulting book have many tendrils extending throughout the University of Minnesota and beyond, and many people have earned my thanks for their part in both projects. First, I thank Mark Dion for his generous art practice, which takes him away from home to spend extended time in exotic locales, including Minnesota, and to plunge himself into the lives of his collaborators and their institutional and community settings. He has changed the Weisman, the University of Minnesota, and the Twin Cities community through his presence and project. I will always cherish our stimulating and fun times together, visiting collections, looking at objects, talking with students, curators, artists, and museum staff, and discussing all manner of things. Mark is a model of intellectual curiosity and infuses those around him with similar fervor.

This project could not have happened without Bill Horrigan, media arts curator at the Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State University in Columbus. It was Bill who first told me about Mark's *Cabinet of Curiosities* project at the Wexner. He made the initial connection with Mark and convinced him that the Weisman would be a good partner on a similar undertaking. Bill's eloquence and keen intelligence informed the Wexner's version of Mark's project, and I am very grateful that Bill was willing to reflect on his experiences with Mark in a conversation for this publication.

I thank E. Bruce Robertson, professor of art history at the University of California–Santa Barbara and now also consulting curator of American art at Los Angeles County Museum of Art, who served as a stimulating colleague. He contributed an essay for this volume that discusses a similar revival of the cabinet of curiosities that he and fellow art history professor Mark Meadow created for the UCSB Art Museum. Their work as part of *Microcosms: Objects of Knowledge,* including the conference "Return to Wonder: Rethinking Museum Display in an Age of Didacticism," held at UCSB in 2000, was instrumental in my thinking about the contemporary revival of interest in the cabinet of curiosities.

The eight students who served as cocurators on the cabinet of curiosities were exemplary partners. All were intellectually engaged, visually astute, and creative thinkers. They pushed the final content of the exhibition in new directions that even Mark Dion had not anticipated. He has acknowledged that this project took on an even greater collaborative nature for him than most. I am grateful to Lisa Arnold, Kate Carmody, Alison Gerber, John Knuth, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter, and Catherine Wilkins for their spirited collaboration; two students, Annie Johnson and Marlene Buls, were full partners in the exhibition but were not able to participate in this publication. Their work made manifest a key aspect of the Weisman's mission to serve as a workshop and training ground for University of Minnesota students. I am pleased to recognize that, after their work on this project, many of them have gone on to or have completed graduate programs, a mark of their artistic and intellectual dedication.

I thank the dozens of curators and other faculty and staff at the University of Minnesota who collaborated with us to cull objects from their respective collections for the exhibition. Though sometimes

initially perplexed at our unusual requests, they were indispensable guides to their holdings and their disciplines. Their generous loans made the exhibition possible. In addition to the fifteen collection curators who wrote essays for this book, I thank Elaine Challacombe, Owen H. Wangensteen Historical Library of Biology and Medicine; Mary Beth Garrgian, Raptor Center; Alan Lathrop, Northwest Architectural Archives; Dr. Walter Mackey, Minnesota Historical Veterinary Museum; Sandra Edwardson, School of Nursing; Joel Wurl, Immigration History Research Center; Richard Isaacson, Andersen Horticultural Library; David Klaassen, Social Welfare History Archives; Lois Hendrickson, University of Minnesota Archives; Andrea Hindig, Kautz Family YMCA Archives; Elisabeth Kaplan, Charles Babbage Institute, Center for the History of Information Technology; Chris Gable, School of Music Collection; Carol Urness, James Ford Bell Library; Donald C. Johnson, Ames Library of South Asia; Brent Allison, John R. Borchert Map Library; Paul Haack, School of Music; Karal Ann Marling, Department of Art History; and staff at the Air Force ROTC and Army ROTC.

My colleagues on the Weisman Art Museum staff demonstrated once again their consummate skills, lively ideas, and professionalism. They joined this effort to upend typical museum displays and divisions of collections with a great sense of adventure and fun. Lyndel King, director of the Weisman, was instrumental in our undertaking this project, both the exhibition and book. I appreciate her ongoing support for my sometimes out-of-the-ordinary exhibitions. Mark Dion's installation still holds the record for greatest number of objects in a single Weisman exhibit. Karen Duncan, our registrar, handled the loans, transport, conditioning, and care of more than seven hundred objects, including unusual biological specimens, with care and enthusiasm. Jackie Starbird, curatorial assistant, produced the incredibly long checklist of all items in the exhibit with her expert eye and organizational skills. Mark Kramer, our exhibits coordinator and designer, and our art crew (Timothy White, John Sonderegger, and Steve Ecklund) were good-humored and creative partners on the installation. Judi Petkau, our youth program and tour guide coordinator, organized a spirited "Curious Collections" family day event, which included the display of miniature cabinets created by our school partner, Marcy Open School, with teacher JoAnne Toft and her students. Jill Boldenow gracefully and skillfully handled the many details of Mark's numerous visits and helped arrange the public programs. Intern Tonia Zehrer was instrumental in researching and compiling all the University of Minnesota collections information. Other members of the Weisman staff made Mark feel at home here and assisted in innumerable ways on the project.

I'm very pleased that the University of Minnesota Press agreed that this project needed to be shared more widely than the exhibition could allow. At the Press, Doug Armato, director; Todd Orjala, senior acquisitions editor; Pieter Martin, acquisitions editor; Katie Houlihan, editorial assistant; and Laura Westlund, managing editor, all have my deep gratitude for making this book, with all its multiple authors, a reality. Frances Baca, book designer, did an exquisite job conveying the spirit and look of the cabinets in this format.

Finally, I thank the funders of the exhibition project, without whom the installation and book would not have been possible: the University of Minnesota Sesquicentennial Celebration Fund, the Bell Museum of Natural History, the Humanities Institute at the University of Minnesota, and, at the Weisman Art Museum, the B. J. O. Nordfeldt Fund for American Art.

— C. J. S.

COLLEEN J. SHEEHY

Introduction: Restaging the Cabinet of Curiosities

IT'S RARE FOR A MUSEUM EXHIBITION or installation to receive a full account of its organizing processes and actors, its underpinning concepts and physical elements. The stock-in-trade of museum publications is the exhibition catalogue, which documents the final exhibition but usually focuses on single works of art in isolated illustrations. Seldom can an exhibition catalogue, usually published to coincide with the opening of an exhibition, feature images of the project's installation, where objects are juxtaposed with each other to convey key curatorial ideas and relationships. Therefore exhibitions remain woefully underrepresented as visual environments. The study of exhibition installation and design, both contemporary and historical, is hampered by that lack of documentation, which may lie buried in archived files of exhibition designers and in the memories of museum curators. The typical exhibition documentation—the checklist of exhibition contents—provides only a skeleton of the dynamic body of the exhibition, of the ways objects are presented and visitors experience the three-dimensional space of an exhibition. Similarly, the activities that lay behind the installation—curatorial research, interactions with potential lenders, the evolution of ideas in relation to the objects discovered and studied, the development of exhibition layout and design—are usually invisible in museum publications, unless they receive a cursory mention in prefaces or introductions. Fortunately, this inattention is diminishing as museum and academic scholars recognize the importance of studying the exhibition as a cultural and artistic form in itself. Books addressing this issue include Fred Wilson's *Mining the Museum: An Installation,* edited by Lisa Graziose Corrin; *The Power of Display: A History of Exhibition Design at the Museum of Modern Art,* by Mary Anne Stanizewski; Charles Haxthausen's edited anthology *The Two Art Histories: The Museum and the University;* and Eric Sandeen's *Picturing an Exhibition: The Family of Man and 1950s America.*[1]

Cabinet of Curiosities: Mark Dion and the University as Installation adds to this literature on exhibitions not only for scholars but also for readers interested in collecting by museums and universities, or those who may be interested in the history of the University of Minnesota, Ohio State University, or universities in general, or others with an interest in contemporary art. This volume takes as its primary focus two versions of a cabinet of curiosities created by international artist Mark Dion, one at the Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State University in Columbus in 1997 and the other at the Weisman Art Museum at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis in 2001. Both used collections amassed by those major research universities during their 150-year-plus histories. While sharing conceptual and structural underpinnings, these two installations were markedly different in design, contents, and organizing processes, revealing the deep histories and contemporary practices of their respective universities and the adaptive nature of Dion's work. The artist frequently mines existing collections to create evocative installations that mimic museum exhibitions. His projects lead viewers beyond the objects to consider their provenance, or sources and lineages of ownership, as well as the ways in which collecting has served as a central

base for knowledge in the West, building our notions of how the world works. The museum and the university not only collect but act as institutional interpreters of that vast body of physical evidence.

Like Fred Wilson's book documenting his 1992 exhibition *Mining the Museum,* this volume describes the process behind Dion's installations at both the Wexner Center and the Weisman, offering multiple perspectives on the components of these artworks. Readers will learn of the ideas and activities that brought the final installation of the cabinets of curiosities together. They will gain a sense of Dion's thoughts on art, collections, and universities. And they will be introduced to the curators who worked alongside him: Bill Horrigan, curator of media arts at the Wexner Center; myself and eight students at the University of Minnesota; and fifteen of the collections curators at the University of Minnesota, who worked with Dion and the curatorial team and generously loaned valuable objects from their collections to the Weisman installation.

This book has many voices. Dion's own is heard in his conversational exchange with Bill Horrigan, in which they recall their work together on the first *Cabinet of Curiosities* installation and compare it to its second life at the Weisman Art Museum. In several short essays, the Weisman's student collaborators reflect on specific aspects of their curatorial research, ranging from looking at one object (the famous bezoar or cow's hair ball) to explaining the logic of their cabinet installations. Short pieces by curators of University of Minnesota collections contribute more insight into what, how, and why those bodies of objects have been amassed.

Left: Model of the human eye from the Cabinet of the Allegory of Vision in *Mark Dion: Cabinet of Curiosities,* Weisman Art Museum, 2001.

While both iterations of Dion's *Cabinet of Curiosities* are discussed and pictured here, greater depth is devoted to the process, institutional sources, and final display of the Weisman's installation at the University of Minnesota. My essay, "A Walrus Head in the Art Museum: Mark Dion Digs into the University of Minnesota," aims to elaborate the process that lay behind the exhibition at the Weisman, thereby revealing what would normally remain behind the scenes, a part of the project that Dion insists is as critical as the final display. I hope that the essay conveys the wave of intellectual engagement and excitement that carried all of us from its beginnings to the closing of the exhibition in late May 2001. That engagement propelled us to create this publication to reach audiences near and far and to give longer life to the installation, which also marked the University of Minnesota's Sesquicentennial.

The attention devoted to the Weisman display allows readers to understand one case study in detail and complexity, and thereby to consider more fully how one university has collected and used objects to produce knowledge within disciplinary structures. The University of Minnesota is much like other major public research universities, which have accumulated astounding collections of millions of objects from culture and nature. This book offers institutional readings through the archaic exhibitionary form of the cabinet of curiosities or the cabinet of wonder.

Cabinets of wonder or *wunderkammern* have become a compelling subject of scholarly study over the past twenty years during a revival of interest in this early form of display, which developed during the Renaissance among kings, princes, popes, and wealthy merchants. Artists have turned to these cabinets as fascinating, value-laden, and highly charged means to activate objects in evocative ways. Art historians E. Bruce Robertson and Mark Meadow at the University of California–Santa Barbara present complementary evidence of the renewed interest in the cabinet of wonder in their major project *Microcosms*. Since the early 1990s, they have studied the cabinet of curiosity and organized a series of symposia with international scholars and museum curators. They mounted an exhibition, *Microcosms: Objects of Knowledge (A University Collects),* at the University Art Museum at UCSB in 1995. That display compared the organizing concepts of a Renaissance cabinet with modern conceptions of how objects are used and interpreted. As curators, they drew from the multitude of collections in the University of California system in a way similar to Dion's projects in Minnesota and Ohio. Robertson discusses that exhibition here to comment more broadly on the intellectual and operational relationships linking universities, museums, and cabinets of curiosities.

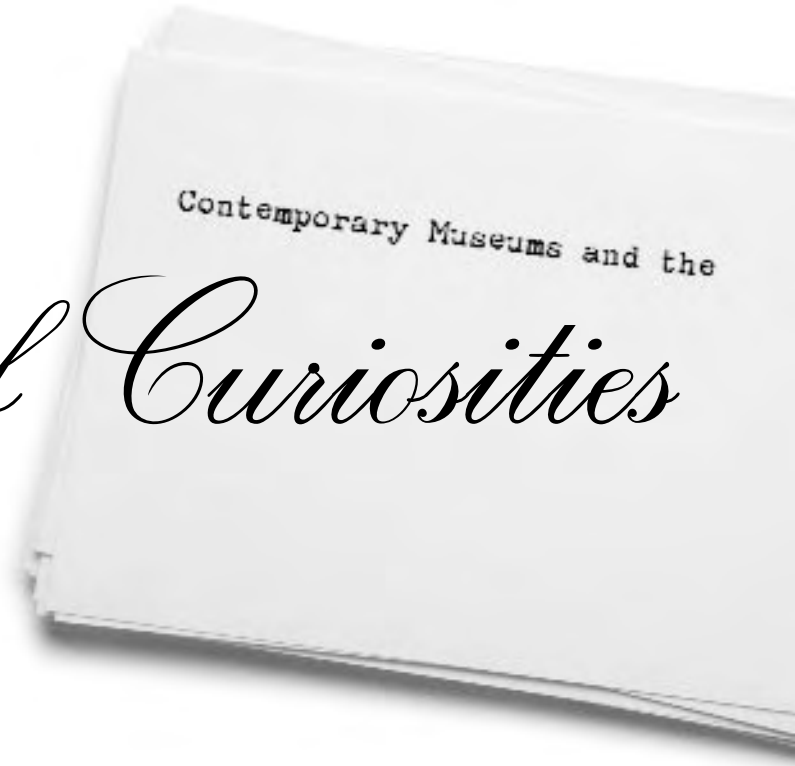
Mark Dion changes institutions through his projects, and his *Cabinet of Curiosities* at the Weisman still reverberates. The student curators have gone on to graduate programs in art and art history and have continued to curate exhibitions. The Weisman created new links with science departments at the university that we now develop and build on. The cow's bezoar from the Minnesota Historical Veterinary Museum, a key object of our project, has taken on legendary proportions on campus; it has appeared in several more exhibitions, including one at the Minnesota State Fair on the history of the university. After Dion's project at the Weisman, the Bell Museum of Natural History hosted an "Oddities and Curiosities of Nature" family day that featured natural anomalies, taking off on the cabinet of wonder's aim to astound viewers. More recently, a new curator for a gallery at the university's alumni center decided to use the Dion project as a model for an exhibit about the university. Last time we talked, he was on the trail of the bezoar.

Finally, *Cabinet of Curiosities: Mark Dion and the University as Installation* offers testament to the creative mind and energizing presence of Mark Dion, an artist whose work worldwide continues to challenge our ideas about our knowledges and our values. Like a biological catalyst, Dion prompts interaction, speeds processes, and shakes up existing structures, resulting in artworks whose critical practices and final installations are among the most provocative of our time.

Note

1. Fred Wilson, *Mining the Museum: An Installation*, Lisa Graziose Corrin, ed. (New York: The New Press in cooperation with The Contemporary, Baltimore, 1994); Mary Anne Stanizewski, *The Power of Display: A History of Exhibition Design at the Museum of Modern Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1998); Charles W. Haxthausen, ed., *The Two Art Histories: The Museum and the University*, Clark Studies in the Visual Arts (Williamstown, Mass.: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2002); Eric J. Sandeen, *Picturing an Exhibition: The Family of Man and 1950s America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995).

Cabinet of Curiosities



A Walrus Head in the Art Museum

Mark Dion Digs into the University of Minnesota

COLLEEN J. SHEEHY

IT WAS THE BEZOAR, I believe, that made all the difference. Mark Dion had arrived at the University of Minnesota in December 1999 to meet me and the rest of the staff at the Weisman Art Museum and to visit a handful of the remarkable, world-class collections held by the university. I had managed to land Dion in Minnesota between his project at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego and his return home to rural Pennsylvania, via New York City. This alone was no easy task to arrange for this itinerant artist, who literally travels the world to execute his ambitious art projects. He agreed to this initial visit to discuss whether he would be interested and able to undertake his *Cabinet of Curiosities* exhibition with us, a project he had originally done at the Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State University in Columbus in 1997.

Left: A walrus head was among the seven hundred objects displayed at the Weisman Art Museum in *Mark Dion: Cabinet of Curiosities* (2001).

On the third day of our explorations to university storage rooms, book stacks, and vaults, we stopped in a little-known museum on the St. Paul campus, where the biological sciences and agricultural colleges are located. The Minnesota Historical Veterinary Museum, occupying a small gallery in the Animal Science building, chronicles the history and practice of veterinary medicine here, an important endeavor to an agricultural state like Minnesota. The museum was created and is lovingly staffed by retired faculty, who volunteer their time. It was there that we found the bezoar. Actually, the museum displayed several: brown spherical forms, one with the texture of felt, another with a harder, mineral-like surface. Some were softball size, others as big as bowling balls. As with so many biological specimens and other facets of natural history, Dion knew exactly what they were. My intern, Tonia Zehrer, and I were mystified—and then somewhat horrified when we learned that they were hair balls from cows' stomachs. Not only part of veterinary practice in Minnesota, bezoars were commonly found in cabinets of curiosities during the Renaissance, when they were considered wondrous objects with magical properties. I photographed Mark holding two bezoars with a bright gleam in his eyes. That day he agreed to do *Cabinet of Curiosities* with the Weisman.

So began an extraordinary undertaking that culminated with the intriguing exhibition *Mark Dion: Cabinet of Curiosities* at the Weisman Art Museum from February 24 through May 27, 2001. Like much of Dion's work, this exhibition challenged usual contemporary museum practice, bringing together objects that, over the course of centuries, had been divorced from each other in museum collections and displays through disciplinary practices and specialization. An enormous and rather startling stuffed walrus head from the Mammal Collection of the Bell Museum of Natural History was placed at the beginning of the exhibition on one end of a salon-style hanging that covered a gallery wall from top to bottom. The walrus head signaled to Weisman visitors that this was an exhibition of a different order than they would normally encounter here. Nine cabinets lined the opposite gallery wall, recreating the style of Renaissance cabinets of curiosities with their density of display and the integration of biological specimens with minerals, fossils, sculpture, paintings, decorative objects, books, musical instruments, historical artifacts, and technical devices.

Mark Dion and bezoars, Minnesota Historical Veterinary Museum, University of Minnesota. Photograph by Colleen J. Sheehy.

This striking, unusual installation offered visitors an intricate puzzle. Its aesthetic of artifactual density, unusual juxtapositions, and organization according to allegorical themes enlivened their experience of the museum environment, especially when most art museums today employ a modernist installation aesthetic of isolating objects for singular contemplation. With 701 objects on display (the most ever in a single show at the Weisman), *Mark Dion: Cabinet of Curiosities* represented the University of Minnesota in miniature, just as the historical cabinets had attempted to represent a microcosm of the whole world. Like other major research universities, the University of Minnesota attempts to represent the entire universe of knowledge through its multitude of disciplines, departments, schools, and institutes. Thus the Weisman's *Cabinet of Curiosities* became a microcosm within a microcosm, referring in myriad directions to the enormous, unwieldy world and what is knowable through material things.

Like an archaeologist, Dion dug into the underground of the university, where millions of objects in dozens of disciplines have been collected throughout 150 years of university history. Like fossils or artifacts from past civilizations, most of these objects were buried in collection storage areas dispersed across the campus and were rarely seen by the public, even though used in essential ways for faculty research and teaching. The stories of the collections represent much about the history of various disciplines and of departments at this institution. These stories also become accounts of the movement of objects and accounts of spaces, as objects and specimens were transferred from their original settings or taken from the wild and moved into collections in offices, laboratories, storage cabinets, shelves, vaults, and rooms, sometimes appearing in displays in exhibitions. The objects also represent stories of individual collectors and scholars, who left their mark on disciplines and remnants of their work for others to use and build on.

Mark Dion: Cabinet of Curiosities was visually arresting, stopping visitors in their tracks as they entered the Weisman galleries. Many people spent an hour or more scrutinizing the contents of the cabinets and salon wall, delighting in the rare, unusual, or perplexing objects. Yet this display was only part of the

Mark Dion, *The Tate Thames Dig* (1999). Dion, Simon Upton, and volunteers at the Tate Museum, working with bones. Photograph courtesy of Mark Dion.

project; Dion's art consists of the process behind his installations as much as the final exhibits themselves. In *The Tate Thames Dig* (1999), Dion mounted an archaeological project in London in which he organized two week-long digs, one at the banks of the Thames River near the old Tate Museum and the other just below the future Tate Modern, which opened in 2000. Twenty volunteers worked with Dion to unearth artifacts on the riverbanks, where tents were raised to house their findings—everything from rusty keys, knives, and a baby shoe, to bullet shells, teeth, animal bones, broken pottery, glass, and toys. Immediately, Dion and his volunteers worked out a categorization scheme to organize the collections, designating boxes for ceramics, bone, glass, shells, wood, leather, metal, plastic, electrical objects, and so on. After digging, cleaning, and categorizing, Dion arranged the disparate objects in a large cabinet, now on permanent display at the Tate Modern. With its inclusion of all objects that were found—old and recent, trash and treasure—the display offers an alternative story to official histories of London. Commenting on *The Tate Thames Dig*, Dion said:

> I think about this project as consisting of three stages: the dig, the cleaning and preparation, and the exhibition in a cabinet. For me they are all equally important . . . . One way to describe this project is to say that it visualizes the entire process leading up to the final exhibition.[1]

Because process is central to Dion's art, the backstory of the Weisman's *Cabinet of Curiosities* needs telling as much as does documenting the final exhibition. In addition to revealing the process behind this installation, in this essay I want to enrich our understanding of this exhibition by relating it to Dion's other work, to aspects of contemporary art practice, and to the multidisciplinary revival of interest in the Renaissance cabinet of curiosities.

When Dion committed to the Weisman project, we devised a plan that would involve University of Minnesota students as collaborators. After the Wexner iteration of his *Cabinet of Curiosities,* Dion knew the time demands of examining dozens of massive research collections. He also knew that, given his other projects and travel schedule, he would need ample assistance with our undertaking. Having worked with students on several exhibition projects already (a central feature of the Weisman as a university art museum), I proposed to develop a course that would address the history and theories of collecting and museums as well as examine Dion's other work and issues in contemporary art. The students in the course would help to research university collections and become curators with Dion of *Cabinet of Curiosities.*

The Weisman was eager to pursue this project with Dion. He is an impressive contemporary artist, with more than one hundred museum and gallery shows since 1985, many of them major installations and solo exhibitions.[2] He is a fascinating thinker about a wide range of topics—conceptions of nature; the history of natural history; the history of museums; the epistemologies that objects give rise to; and the power of contemporary art to address serious issues. As is now common in contemporary art practice, Dion employs a range of tools, methods, and media to create his art. He works in photography, film, performance, printmaking, drawing, and critical writing. Yet his signature works are the major installations, which convey the density and range of issues that compel him. Most of his installations combine specimens from natural history with artifacts from history, library, and art collections, and, sometimes, popular artifacts. In several works, Dion amasses his own collections through ambitious fieldwork expeditions or archaeological digs. Dion stimulates a reconsideration of categories of knowledge and ways of knowing generated through the material world. His work provides a rich and complex reading of the museum, of the history of disciplines, and of contemporary art.

Dion's propensity for critically engaged work draws on his background and training. He was born in 1961 in New Bedford, Massachusetts, where, growing up, he witnessed firsthand the declining commercial fishing industry, which instilled in him a deep knowledge of the intertwining of humans, nature, and economics. From a working-class family, Dion says that he didn't visit an art museum until he was eighteen, though he loved popular imagery and he loved to draw. He decided to attend art school at the University of Hartford (which awarded him an honorary doctorate in 2002); he then moved on to the Visual Studies Program in New York City. In 1985, he joined the Independent Study Program at the Whitney Museum of American Art, where he studied with conceptual artists Joseph Kosuth and Hans Haacke, media artist Barbara Kruger, critic Craig Owens, and documentary photographer Martha Rosler. He forged strong ties with his cohort group of students and immersed himself in readings ranging from Michel Foucault to Robert Smithson. His mentors emphasized understanding strategies of representation, the cultural construction of ideas and values, and a critique of powerful institutions.[3]

Dion in Venezuelan rain forest, collecting specimens for *On Tropical Nature*. Photograph courtesy of Mark Dion.

Mark Dion, *On Tropical Nature* (1991). Table of collected objects in a museum gallery in Venezuela. Photograph courtesy of Mark Dion.

In the 1990s, Dion began to create installations in which process and site-specificity were central elements. Inspired by his concern with the process of research and collecting, he engaged in the activities of a scientist/researcher/explorer for many works, recreating a role that had been adopted by numerous artists from the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries (think of John James Audubon's expeditions to chronicle, study, and record American birds). Dion launched a number of collaborative endeavors with scientists, artists, museum staff, and volunteers. In 1991, he was commissioned by the Sala Mendoza, an alternative art space in Caracas, Venezuela, to create a new piece. *On Tropical Nature* emerged from Dion's three-week expedition into the remote jungles of the Orinoco Basin, where he collected natural specimens, mostly insects and plants. Once a week, a boat would rendezvous with Dion and deliver his research boxes to the museum. The museum installation began as three empty tables in a gallery. As the boxes arrived, museum staff arranged the materials, along with his notebooks, maps, and tools, with no special instructions from Dion. They had to create an order and rationale to display the materials, raising questions about how we make sense of nature. This emphasis on process prompts a reflection on and realization that our sense-making is a human construction and not necessarily a truth of the natural world. Dion has said that he adopts some methods of earlier naturalists because "distanced critique is a useful but boring tool. I like the idea of throwing myself into the fray. My role in *On Tropical Nature* was to become a magnet for critical questioning."[4]

In 1992, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Rio de Janeiro invited Dion to participate in the exhibition *Arte Amazones,* mounted to coincide with the United Nations Earth Summit, the gathering of officials from 175 nations to address global environmental concerns. For this piece, Dion modeled his work after William Beebe, an American biologist from the early twentieth century. Beebe had excavated soil from the Amazonian rain forest, which he sent to New York City for examination. Beebe believed that the topsoil of the rain forest had as much variety of life as Amazonian mammal, bird, and plant life, a concept that was revolutionary for his time and still unusual today. In *A Meter of Jungle,* Dion excavated one square meter of jungle in the Amazonian rain forest and took the material to a gallery in Rio de Janeiro, where he sifted through and examined it. He removed the invertebrates (bugs and worms, basically), then identified, labeled, and displayed them. Similarly, in *The Great Munich Bug Hunt* (1993), he removed a dead tree from the Black Forest and moved it into a gallery in Munich. Working with a group of entomologists,

Mark Dion, *A Meter of Jungle* (1992). Dion in gallery–laboratory in Rio de Janeiro. Photograph courtesy of Mark Dion.

Dion and his team removed all the invertebrates, then identified, labeled, preserved, catalogued, and displayed them in cabinets. In both of these projects, Dion's laboratory activity was on display in the galleries as well as his finished formal presentation of the research.

These pieces demonstrate Dion's interest in the process of collecting and in the ways that collections are then categorized, becoming an epistemology of the biological and material worlds. He utilizes the methods of science and museums, foregrounding these activities as part of his work. But he also suggests the contingency of these systems of knowledge by employing alternate and unexpected display techniques. In *A Tale of Two Seas*, a project from 1996 for a gallery in Cologne, Germany, Dion collaborated with German artist Stephan Dillemuth, making expeditions to the Baltic and North Seas, where they scavenged along shorelines for natural and human-made objects. Taken back to the gallery, these objects were installed in a two-sided cabinet, each side representing one shoreline and source of materials. Water and soil samples, dead birds and fish, fishing equipment, plastic and glass bottles, rusty cans, and other debris were placed on the shelves. Objects were arranged in such a way as to defy obvious categories and hierarchies. Instead, the display prompted questions about the logic of its order and also encouraged viewers to see the objects as abstract forms, appreciated for color, patina, shape, and texture as much as for their sources or functions.[5] Responses to a piece like this can vacillate between fascination, repulsion, awe, or bewilderment. Dion does not prescribe a reading or reaction but engages the viewer in analysis and discernment of the order, origins, and meanings of objects.

Another impetus for the Weisman's commission of Dion was the University of Minnesota's anticipated celebration of the sesquicentennial of the signing, in 1851, of the charter establishing this land grant institution. During the 2000–2001 academic year, the university planned numerous events to observe this landmark anniversary. What better way to make the riches and the history of the university visible than through a creative project that would integrate objects from across disciplines, joining the

humanities and the sciences? The exhibition could offer an innovative version of university history. The Weisman proposed this project to the university's Sesquicentennial Committee and received ringing endorsement and funding.

To enlist the student collaborators, a seminar class, "The Making of Collections, Museums, and Knowledge," was crosslisted in American studies, art, art history, and museum studies. Eight students in the fall 2000 course became creative partners in our enterprise: Lisa Arnold, doctoral student in theater; Marlene Buls, master's student in liberal studies; Kate Carmody, senior in art, art history, and anthropology; Alison Gerber, senior in art; Annie Johnson, senior in art history; John Knuth, senior in art; Jean-Nickolaus Tretter, senior in an individualized program on archival, museum, and library studies; and Catherine (Cassie) Wilkins, doctoral student in art history. More than simply serving as research assistants, the students brought their own interests, values, and aesthetics to the table—and to the cabinets. Later, Dion commented that the Minnesota project was his most collaborative ever, with his acceding more authority about the content and style of the installation to our student collaborators than he had in previous projects.

The course introduced the students to the scholarship on collecting and the history of museums, an active academic area during the past twenty years, when a critical museum literature has developed. The act of collecting and collections as bodies of knowledge have been subject to critical analysis, departing from the more typical kind of "tribute" to collectors most often found in museum publications. This new scholarship has opened up the world of the museum to increasing scrutiny, unlocking the apparent natural order of things that museums often seem to present, from their canons of art to hierarchies of nature. Among the studies that have contributed greatly to new views of the museum are Eilean Hooper-Greenhill's *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge,* Tony Bennett's *Birth of the Museum,* Alan Wallach's *Exhibiting Contradiction*, and Carol Duncan's *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*.

These authors have regarded institutions as very much embedded in their political and social contexts. Employing Michel Foucault's concepts of the construction of knowledge and power in institutions, they have revealed the epistemological underpinnings of museums at various historical moments and today. Similarly, historian Neil Harris has examined the links between museums and other institutions of power and display such as world expositions and department stores.[6] As a result of this scholarship, which continues to grow, we have gained insights into museum history and museums' social dynamics and have generated new tools to understand, critique, and change these powerful institutions. Simultaneously, museums have been undergoing increasing self-scrutiny as they try to become more responsive to wider publics in their communities.[7]

As part of this new scholarship, the act and history of collecting have received renewed attention from a variety of perspectives. Krzysztof Pomian documents the early European collections, noting that they consisted of natural *(naturalia)* and artificial *(artificialia)* or human-made objects that were "kept temporarily or permanently out of the economic circuit, afforded special protection in enclosed places adapted specifically for that purpose and put on display."[8] He thus identifies the key aspects of collections: a purposeful assortment of objects that are removed from their usual circulation paths, natural, economic, or functional, to be preserved and displayed. While Pomian contributed a valuable study of early collecting, other scholars today examine the multidimensions of collecting both for individuals and for institutions, viewing the act as a highly charged, value-laden activity and the collection as a complex artifact as a whole. In anthologies such as Susan M. Pearce's *Interpreting Objects and Collections* and John Elsner and Roger Cardinal's *The Cultures of Collecting*, authors from the fields of sociology, literature, art history, psychology, and anthropology have addressed theoretical perspectives on collecting and ways of analyzing private and institutional collections.[9]

Related to this scholarship is the revival of interest in the cabinets of curiosities from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (although forms of the cabinet continued to exist far beyond that period).[10]

Historians of the Renaissance, such as Paula Findlen and Barbara Maria Stafford, have studied the cabinets as key to the changing modes of knowledge created by discovery of the New World, acknowledging their impact on civil society and the history of ideas. Many scholars have recognized their embodiment of the prehistory of the modern museum.

Cabinets of curiosities or cabinets of wonder were most often rooms for display of collections in private villas or palaces, what we would call a gallery today, although they were also sometimes a single ornate cabinet to hold precious objects. Princes such as the Medici and the Hapsburgs compiled objects for cabinets that they could command from merchants and explorers to Africa and the New World. The cabinets represented a transformation in knowledge acquisition: new emphasis was placed on gaining information from material objects—the remnants of classical ruins, archaeological materials—and from nature, as the reliance on religious texts as the primary means to know the world diminished. An engraving of Ferrante Imperator's cabinet in Naples in 1599 shows a room filled with natural history specimens (shells, fish, reptiles, birds, and plants) arranged with ceramics, books, and sculpture. This was a place for conversation, exchange, and sharing of knowledge among the men who gathered there. What may strike our modern eyes as a chaotic display actually had a complex system of ordering based on symbols, association, memory, and similitude.[11] These private collections became the basis for institutional holdings when public museums were widely established in the West in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Artists, too, have been interested in collecting, in the cabinet of wonder, and in thinking critically about museums. Some artists, such as Andy Warhol, have been avid collectors and have used collecting to create work (for example, Claes Oldenburg's *Mouse Museum*) as well as to comment on museum practices and power.[12] A key work in this regard is Fred Wilson's 1992 project with the Maryland Historical Society, *Mining the Museum*. Wilson spent a year with the historical collection and museum staff, then from his research he curated a startling exhibition that exposed the gaps, lapses, and silences of the collection, particularly in its representation of the history of African Americans in Maryland. At the entry to the gallery, he placed three pedestals with sculptural busts from the museum collection: Napoleon Bonaparte, Henry

Mark Dion, *The Great Chain of Being* (1999). Museum of Modern Art, New York. Photograph courtesy of Mark Dion.

Clay, and Andrew Jackson, none of whom was from Maryland or had a substantial role in the history of the state. Just across from those, he placed three empty pedestals, displaying the names of three people who were important in Maryland history but were not represented in the collection: Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, and Benjamin Banneker. In a very different manner, artist David Wilson creates a stylized museum in his Museum of Jurassic Technology in Los Angeles, where displays are devoted to arcane and seemingly unbelievable topics and objects. One exhibit featured infinitesimal sculptures created inside the eye of a needle by Armenian immigrant Hagop Sandaldjian, viewed through microscopes. David Wilson's displays recover and insist on significant systems of knowledge that have been discredited or overlooked in the rational order of the scientific, modern museum.[13]

This growing and powerful artistic practice was vividly portrayed in a major exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1999, *The Museum as Muse: Artists Reflect,* curated by Kynaston McShine. The exhibition brought together the work of more than fifty artists, ranging from late nineteenth-century photographers to Marcel Duchamp with his portable museum, *Boîte-en-valise,* Joseph Cornell and his evocative boxes, Fluxus artists, and new art commissioned for the show. The exhibition acknowledged in a high-profile project how artists do not just contemplate the museum but also take a critical view of the institution, exposing its means and power structures.[14]

Mark Dion participated in *The Museum as Muse*, contributing his installation *The Great Chain of Being*. The piece employed a Renaissance-style library cabinet to display a progression of specimens and objects, from rocks and minerals to plants, invertebrates, and then vertebrates, culminating with a bust of Aristotle. Dion adeptly used a pre-Enlightenment form of collection and display that constructed a miniature world of knowledge; he mines museum history to prompt considerations of alternate epistemologies to the dominant disciplinary divisions that are found today in museums (and in universities). He frequently utilizes the form of the cabinet as a container, physical and conceptual, a practice that benefits from his having seen firsthand many of the remnants of Renaissance cabinets that still exist.

Mark Dion: Cabinet of Curiosities at the Weisman Art Museum had a six-month timeline, which was short compared to most exhibitions, particularly ones of this magnitude. The curatorial research and the mounting of the exhibit took place from September 2000 to opening day in late February 2001. During fall semester, Dion was in residence for one week each month at the Weisman, when he would meet with the class, lecture about his work and museum history, provide guidance and suggestions, explain his organization plan for the installation, and visit collections. "Our exhibit will be an artifact of our experience," he told students on his first day with the class, continuing, "I think of you, my collaborators, as the first audience for this work, with other layers of audience building from there," referring to the collections curators, the Weisman staff, and eventually the exhibition visitors. He spoke of his interests in the history of museums and in the cabinet of curiosities, saying that cabinets are fascinating because they show "science at its infancy, magic at its death," being informed by alchemical traditions as well as by the Christian notion that God had imbued nature with meaning, making natural objects into symbols.

Dion also introduced the students to the organizing concept for our *Cabinet of Curiosities,* using the same schema as his similar display at the Wexner Center for the Arts. Following Renaissance cosmology, concepts that drew on worldviews of the ancients, the nine cabinets would each have a theme devoted to one category of the world's organization: Cabinet of the Underworld, Cabinet of the Sea, Cabinet of the Air, Cabinet of the Terrestrial Realm, Cabinet of Humankind, Cabinet of the Library or Archive, Cabinet of the Allegory of Vision, Cabinet of the Allegory of Sound and Time, and Cabinet of the Allegory of History. Each student selected university collections to research, looking for possible objects for all cabinets. Later in the semester, students chose one cabinet to curate. In a collaborative process, everyone worked together to winnow dozens of recommended objects for each cabinet, with the cabinet curator making final decisions. During this time, Dion also integrated himself into the University of Minnesota and Twin Cities communities, attending Weisman staff meetings; meeting with faculty,

Mark Dion, *Cabinet of Curiosities for the Wexner Center for the Arts* (1997). The Ohio State University. Photograph copyright Richard K. Loesch.

students, and various departments on campus; getting together with local artists; and offering several public lectures on campus and in the community.

A major part of Dion's time was spent visiting collections with the class and with me. (He and I were assigned our own particular collections, just like the students.) On our research trips, we had marvelous adventures, searching out buildings and departments that I had never set foot in before and encountering interesting curators and objects of amazing power and diversity. Everywhere we went, Dion admired the holdings of the University of Minnesota research collections. We surveyed drawers of flies, moths, butterflies, and other insects in the Insect Collection's vast storage room, which holds 3.1 million specimens. Mark boldly held a living tarantula (I declined). We were able to watch surgery at the university's Raptor Center, which rehabilitates injured birds, and observed an operation to remove a bullet pellet from a trumpeter swan. Though the Raptor Center does not house a formal collection, we decided to borrow a bird x-ray from its files for our project (and Dion later used more of its X-rays for another project). Primate researcher and curator Anne Pusey showed us the original handwritten journals kept by Jane Goodall during her research on great apes in Tanzania, another privileged experience of our behind-the-scenes research.

The staggering number of holdings in university collections was daunting, totaling literally in the millions. We relied on curators to navigate their collections and to pull objects they deemed most significant, making them collaborators in our enterprise. At the Owen H. Wangensteen Historical Library of Biology and Medicine, Elaine Challacombe showed us treasures from its incredible book collection, including Renaissance-era human anatomy illustrations and other documents of early medical

science. Joel Wurl toured us through the Immigration History Research Center holdings in the enormous, football-field-sized caverns constructed into the banks of the Mississippi River for the archives of the new Elmer L. Andersen Library. At the Social Welfare History Archives, David Klaassen showed us examples of a poster campaign aimed at preventing venereal diseases among U.S. soldiers during World War II. At the Humphrey Forum, Steve Sandell introduced us to the unique collection of artifacts that had been owned by Hubert H. Humphrey; these ranged from his bowler hat to campaign pins and paraphernalia to pens that signed key federal legislation to all kinds of homemade gifts and artworks given to Humphrey during his years of public service. In the James Ford Bell Library, Carol Urness pulled several beautiful handmade maps, some created as early as the fifteenth century, showing European conceptions of the New World. Kathy Neal, then curator at the Givens Collection of African American Literature, showed us a first edition of Phillis Wheatley's *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (1773), the first publication by an African American author. At the Children's Literature Research Collections, we gazed in wonder at Paul Bunyan's enormous ring—and were even allowed to pick it up.

Mark Dion picks up Paul Bunyan's ring at the Children's Literature Research Collections, University of Minnesota. Photograph by Colleen J. Sheehy.

We were introduced not only to objects but also to the range of storage spaces and techniques required to preserve varied collections' materials. Robert Zink opened drawers holding precise rows of bird specimens in the Ornithological Collection. Anita Cholewa let us peruse the rows of metal cabinets storing plant specimens attached to archival paper at the Herbarium, and Andrew Simons toured us through the storage rooms of the Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, where glass jars of fish and reptile specimens filled the shelves. Everywhere we went, we found awesome objects and dedicated, knowledgeable curators.

Dion was particularly impressed by the Bell Museum of Natural History with its stellar dioramas created by Francis Lee Jaques. Jaques had also painted dioramas at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, a place very familiar to Dion. He could not believe his good fortune in finding two woodcuts by nineteenth-century naturalist and illustrator Thomas Bewick in the Bell's art collection; he had admired these images in books but had never seen original prints, let alone with the actual wooden blocks carved by Bewick.

Dion has enormous regard for curators, recognizing their wealth of knowledge and lifelong dedication to their fields. Yet he also likes to poke around the shaggy edges of collections, seeing them not as the totalizing visions of an area of knowledge but rather intellectual as much as physical constructs, shaped

Mark Dion and Don Luce, curator at the Bell Museum of Natural History, examine a diorama. Photograph by Colleen J. Sheehy.

by individual collectors and by prevailing ideas, and always partial and biased representations of a subject. He acknowledges that their growth frequently comes through quirky donations and eccentric collectors as much as through rational, professional methods. With that in mind, we also peeked into several faculty office collections, which often are the first step in building a collection, before enshrinement in formal, institutional depositories. We visited the office of pop culture scholar and art historian Karal Ann Marling, who agreed to loan her Elvis Presley guitar-shaped clock for the Cabinet of the Allegory of Sound and Time. We stopped at the office of Paul Haack in the School of Music to see his musical instruments from around the world. He demonstrated the startlingly loud, hornlike sound made by blowing in large seashells.

We spent one day in art storage at the Weisman Art Museum, where we surveyed a portion of the museum's twenty thousand objects. Paintings were easy to examine because they were mounted on movable metal screens. Even though I had worked with this collection for more than a decade, this was the first time I pulled out every rack and looked at every painting, a rare treat. We browsed through the shelves of ceramics, sculpture, and decorative arts. Guided by our very different curatorial scheme, we selected objects that have rarely, and in some cases never, been displayed in museum galleries. For our purposes, a large gold-plated, nineteenth-century French clock was the perfect object to top the Cabinet of the Allegory of Sound and Time. Small painted plaster busts of Napoleon Bonaparte and Benjamin Franklin seemed oddities for the Weisman collection; they had been accessioned in 1981 as minor pieces in a large donation of one hundred ceramics and decorative arts. We thought them perfect for the Cabinet of Humankind. We also pulled out well-known gems of the collection: Marsden Hartley's painting of a seahorse and Alfred Bierstadt's small 1886 painting of Minnehaha Falls. The effect of these choices changed the meaning of the objects, leveling them as all equally useful. We regarded them for their symbolic role in our project rather than judging them by strict standards of connoisseurship, artistic pedigree, or value.

Over the course of its history, the Weisman Art Museum had established relationships with many curators at other University of Minnesota collections, at least in the humanities, and these connections came into play in Dion's project. Founded in 1934, the museum was housed for nearly sixty years in Northrop Auditorium, where it occupied rooms for galleries, offices, and storage that were located around the perimeter of the central auditorium. Even prior to opening its new building, designed by Frank Gehry, in 1993, the museum had an active series of exhibitions on campus and in its touring exhibitions program that included holdings from the Kerlan Collection of Children's Literature, the Immigration History Research Center, and Special Collections and Rare Books. However, the Weisman

Cassie Wilkins (left) and Jean-Nickolaus Tretter study volumes of horticultural illustrations for display in cabinets. Photograph by Colleen J. Sheehy.

and its predecessor, the University of Minnesota Art Museum, had never before worked with the campus biological collections. The only previous involvement with science collections had been the display of the newly acquired Anoka meteorite in 1998: the Geology Department had asked the Weisman if we would publicly display the meteorite before it was sliced into pieces to be sent to other researchers, and we placed it in a sculpture case in the Dolly Fiterman Riverview Gallery. That meteor would return to the Weisman for *Cabinet of Curiosities*.

As Mark and I surveyed our research collections, the students were busy on their own forays. Cassie Wilkins viewed incredible original illustrations created by Pierre-Joseph Redouté in 1802 and held by the Andersen Horticultural Library at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. She also recommended beautiful beaded purses, featuring flower motifs, from the Goldstein Museum of Design. Alison Gerber was learning how to skin birds (removing their innards) at the Ornithological Collection, overcoming her repugnance at touching dead animals (given her status as a vegan). Robert Zink, curator of this collection, could not lend these study skins because of their invaluable role in faculty research, which could be compromised by handling or exposure to dust and other environmental elements in an exhibition display. He did agree to lend taxidermied birds: a stuffed owl, a small ornamental tree with stuffed songbirds, and a stuffed penguin. These items, donated by people rather than acquired by researchers, were anomalies to the true research collection and therefore misrepresented the actual methods of ornithology. Stuffed birds are not used for research but have been a mode of display for teaching in exhibitions and also represent the practice of trophy hunting. Therefore, even though we attempted to represent the evidence in ornithology, the items available to us presented a distorted view of its real research methods.

Other students were finding equally fascinating objects. John Knuth took on the Veterinary Anatomy Museum, where all kinds of animal skeletons and body parts are preserved for study. There he found the plastinated calf's head, meant as a demonstration of cleft palate in cows. Plastination allows a very lifelike preservation of an animal part, and preserves it indefinitely. Kate Carmody had selected children's toys from the world-class Children's Literature Research Collections, such as a plastic figurine of The Funny Thing, a dragonlike animal featured in Minnesota author Wanda Gág's book of the same name. Lisa Arnold discovered several disturbing objects in the informal collection amassed by Stephen Feinstein, who heads the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. Kept in his office file cabinets, the collection includes action figures related to the Battle of the Little Big Horn and the photobook of a

young Nazi soldier. Jean-Nickolaus Tretter found a priceless antiphonary from 1503 in the Department of Special Collections and Rare Books, featuring hand-inscribed musical scores and illuminated illustrations. He also was surveying his own collection, at that time still housed in his two-bedroom apartment in St. Paul, related to the history and cultures of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. Marlene Buls was examining fungi in the Herbarium as well as impressive mineral specimens and fossils from the geology collections. We found ourselves frequently in a state of wonder ("wow" was a common reaction) inspired by the objects we discovered in our own backyards.

To some extent, our treks around campus to dozens of far-flung buildings, from the West Bank of the Minneapolis campus to St. Paul, recreated in miniature the voyages of discovery that underpinned the Renaissance cabinets. Then, explorers to the New World brought back unusual flowers, shells, feathers from birds they had never seen before, living animals for display, and artifacts collected from native peoples during explorations and encounters. Our curatorial collaborators were for the most part enthusiastic partners as we listened to new languages and concepts from other disciplines. Occasionally, one of them would express puzzlement about our project. Like the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century explorers, we came and went relatively quickly, rarely having time to absorb the language, culture, or knowledge of our hosts. Our understanding of the artifacts and specimens in the final exhibition was therefore necessarily very partial in most cases, hardly approaching the level of knowledge of the collection curators—again, very much like the earlier explorers and compilers of cabinets of wonder.

As we explored the many collections, we decided to create a salon wall where we could display two-dimensional objects that would not fit into the cabinets (many stellar collections were primarily two-dimensional). This wall was a new feature that had not been in Dion's *Cabinets* at the Wexner Center, where visitors entered an enclosed gallery space and viewed the cabinets from a platform. The Weisman gallery for this exhibition did not allow that kind of installation but could accommodate a salon wall opposite the row of cabinets.

After surveying our collections, we had to collate our findings and decide on appropriateness of objects to our overall schema for the cabinets and salon wall. We considered our project an example of installation art and examined the history of this form. Installation history has only relatively recently been documented and interpreted by art historians. It has a complex past and assumes a wide range of expression that encompasses visual art, architecture, performance, and multimedia. Some critics link it to ancient examples of sites that created powerful experiences, such as Stonehenge or the Lascaux cave in France, and many see its multifarious manifestations in vernacular environments (such as Simon Rodia's Watts Towers) or in themed environments like Disneyland. One root of the medium certainly lies with Marcel Duchamp and his claim that the artist need not be a "maker" of objects but can also be a selector or collector, as it were, claiming objects from the real world. Installation also involves an interest in what postmodern theorist Fredric Jameson has called "spatialization," an area pioneered by artist Kurt Schwitters in his *Merzbau* in Hannover, Germany, in the 1920s and 1930s.[15]

During the past forty years, installation has grown into a major artistic form, forged by artists from a variety of positions. In the early 1960s, the environments created by pop artists Allan Kaprow and George Segal or by the assemblage artist Edward Kienholz provided a strong impetus for large-scale environmental sculpture. They used found objects arrayed and transformed in evocative spaces, often alternative spaces to museums and galleries—storefronts, streets, and alleys. Viewers were invited in to experience the sensory, immersive environment, where, particularly with Kaprow and Segal, performances by the artists were staged, making the space theatrical as much as visual, material, and architectural.

Installation also gained momentum with feminist art in works like *Womanhouse* (1972), created by Miriam Schapiro, Judy Chicago, and the CalArts Feminist Art Program; this piece utilized a real house as its medium, referencing the values and roles embedded in domestic space. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, land or earth artists such as Robert Smithson turned to space and place in the landscape, far from

the museum, as in his signature work *Spiral Jetty,* created by bulldozers in the Great Salt Lake. Smithson developed the concept of "site" (the relation of the artwork to the landscape) and "non-site" (the space of the gallery), and he emphasized the creative tension between the two. These kinds of art practices led critic Lucy Lippard to observe in 1973 that artists were subverting the uniqueness, permanence, and decorative attractiveness of the art object, a tendency she called "the dematerialization of the art work."[16] Process was becoming as important as, and sometimes more important than, a final object. From these beginnings, installation has become a major contemporary artistic practice, moving into a whole range of media, including video and film. Mark Dion is an accomplished practitioner of installation art, and his work references several earlier artists of this form, particularly Smithson.

To plan our installation for *Cabinet of Curiosities*, we spent class meetings at the end of the fall semester compiling lists of objects that could represent the various themes of the cabinets. Using large sheets of paper, we plastered our seminar room with cabinet themes: Underworld, Air, Sea, Humankind, and so on. Each cabinet curator recommended from his or her research collections objects of astonishment, intrigue, significance, visual power, and symbolic relevance that would be appropriate for one theme or another. Metaphor became one of our tools in selecting objects. The Cabinet of the Underworld went beyond strict adherence to things literally found in the ground, such as fossils and minerals, to include metaphoric underworlds. The topic of death was incorporated through Victorian mourning jewelry made from hair of the deceased, obtained from the Goldstein Museum of Design. A Mimbres pot from the Weisman collection decorated with an image of a bat signified the animal's association with dark forces. A book about abolitionist Harriet Tubman introduced the idea of the Underground Railroad. The underworld also referenced the unsanctioned worlds of gay life and operated as a metaphor for hell in a photograph of a thirteenth-century Norwegian woodcut titled *A Sodomite's Descent into Hell,* from the Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies.

In discussing our selection process, certain cabinet curators seized the opportunity to shape the cabinets to reflect their own critiques of power or of official historical narratives. Lisa Arnold wanted her Cabinet of Humankind to recognize the persistence of violence and oppression in human history rather than simply to replicate the hagiography of great men found in earlier cabinets of curiosities. She developed a shelf we called "the shelf of oppression" within her cabinet, where objects connected to opprobrious acts and values were displayed: an elephant's foot made into an ice bucket from the Bell Museum of Natural History (which had been featured in its exhibits on endangered species); a set of action figure from the Battle of the Little Big Horn; a book saved from the Nazis' burning of a Berlin library in 1933, now in the Tretter Collection; a device that measured human skulls in the practice of phrenology (which held that Caucasians were superior to people of color), an object from the Anthropology Department; and a tiny pair of silk shoes that had been used to bind Chinese women's feet, from the Goldstein Museum of Design. Jean-Nickolaus Tretter recommended many objects and books from his collection that documented the history of gay and lesbian culture; in the final exhibit, the history of these subcultures was woven throughout the cabinets and the salon wall.

John Knuth, the curator of the Cabinet of the Allegory of Sound and Time, stretched Dion's notion of these topics in the Wexner installation by thinking creatively about sound. He selected specimens of hissing cockroaches from the Insect Collection and included recent technology (audiocassette tapes)—something that Dion later commented he never would have done, preferring archaic objects. In the Cabinet of the Library or Archive, Jean Tretter made a bold move to choose two mastodon tusks to display at either side of the cabinet as "bookends," thereby breaking out of the plane of the cabinets. He also placed a jar of frogs, important for study of changing and diminishing frog populations, and a stuffed Canada goose with a banded leg in front of the cabinet; he said that the genetic information in these specimens, a common resource for current research in the biological sciences, acts as parallel information to books in libraries. In formulating her cabinet on vision, Annie Johnson decided that she would request

Detail of shelf of oppression, from Cabinet of Humankind.

two dozen spectacles from the Goldstein Museum and incorporate other eyeglasses worn by campaign people in Hubert Humphrey's election efforts. Usually this would seem an excessive number of the same object in an exhibition (and the Goldstein did question our request), but Annie wanted to achieve an impressive density of these objects to convey her theme. Cassie Wilkins developed a conceptual plan for her Cabinet of the Allegory of History that would devote each shelf to certain approaches to history. The top shelf would be history as the account of technological advancement; the second, history as a record of important people and events; the third, history as mythology; and the bottom shelf would present history as the record of everyday life.

References to earlier Renaissance cabinets also guided our selections. It was a given that we would include the bezoar, that mysterious object from the Minnesota Historical Veterinary Museum that helped to launch the project. We placed it in the Cabinet of the Terrestrial Realm, which featured plants and animals. We were compelled to include a narwhal tusk from the Mammal Collection of the Bell Museum of Natural History; during the Renaissance, such specimens were believed to be unicorns' horns and were highly prized in cabinets, sometimes literally worth their weight in gold. Mirrors were also wondrous and symbolic objects in early cabinets. For her cabinet on vision, Annie Johnson borrowed seven cosmetic compacts from the Goldstein Museum, displayed open, and an ornate eighteenth-century German mirror from the Weisman. In keeping with the Renaissance cabinets' interest in anomalies, we selected the world's smallest flowering plant from the Herbarium and the giant ring of mythical Paul Bunyan; a two-headed calf skull and a cyclops horse skull from the Veterinary Anatomy Museum; and the world's smallest book from Special Collections and Rare Books (an edition of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address). A stuffed alligator was included on the salon wall; it was a popular curiosity from the New World in Renaissance cabinets and prominently featured in a well-known engraving of Olaf Wurm's cabinet of the 1650s. Early cabinets often occupied all surfaces in a room, with objects attached even to the ceiling. Recalling that practice, we playfully positioned the graceful skeleton of a howler monkey from the Mammal Collection on an architectural truss running across the exhibition gallery.

Dion's interests include site-specificity, meaning that a piece is unique and makes references to its specific locale and actual place of exhibition, both in terms of its architectural surroundings and institutional setting, creating a particular expression at that site. Our *Cabinet of Curiosities* was site-specific because it was composed of objects from University of Minnesota collections, which could never be duplicated in another venue. Even more, the cabinets' contents and the salon wall embodied a history of the university

1964 New York World's Fair souvenir tumbler, handle from tear-gas grenade, and other objects in Cabinet of the Allegory of History.

as an institution. The objects were specific evidence of the disciplinary history of the institution and its researchers who amassed the collections. Many pieces from the biological, agricultural, and mineral collections that document the state's natural history also referred to Minnesota as a geographic place.

Site-specificity or, as Dion sometimes prefers to call it, "site-sensitivity" came into play in other ways.[17] We selected a fossil from the Geology Collection that university students had found along the banks of the Mississippi River, just outside the current site of the Weisman Art Museum. Professor Karal Ann Marling's *It's a Small World* record album, with that unforgettable tune from the Disneyland ride, was presented in the Cabinet of the Allegory of Sound and Time. Multiple references built out from that object. It represented Marling's work as one of the world's foremost Disney scholars. It also slyly referenced the nature of the cabinets as miniature worlds. And it pointed to the Weisman's two enormous murals from the 1964 World's Fair in New York City, which are placed prominently at the museum entrance and in the gallery where *Cabinet of Curiosities* was located. Walt Disney debuted the ride It's a Small World at the same 1964 World's Fair before moving it to Disneyland. A souvenir glass from the fair, featuring a picture of the New York State Pavilion—where these murals were originally displayed—was borrowed from the office collection of Lyndel King, director of the Weisman Art Museum, and included in the Cabinet of the Allegory of History.

In a more serious tone, a handle from a tear gas grenade that quelled campus protests against the Vietnam War at the University of Minnesota in 1972, from the University of Minnesota Archives, was selected for the shelf on important historical events in the Cabinet of the Allegory of History. Coincidentally, its connection to the Vietnam War related to another exhibition at the Weisman at the time of the Dion installation: a sobering series of photographs taken at a Cambodian prison in the mid-1970s. Nearly all prisoners were later killed as part of a genocidal campaign by leader Pol Pot's regime in the aftermath of U.S. bombing in Cambodia during the Vietnam War. These kinds of references suggest the intricacies of possible readings of objects with their complex relationships to each other and to their new setting at the Weisman.

According to Dion's design for the installation, each cabinet would have a large object to crown its top and represent its theme. Standing out from the density of the cabinet shelves, these objects added a strong visual punch and punctuation to the work. For the Underworld, Marlene Buls selected a fiberglass model of a *Tyrannosaurus rex* from the Geology Collection. For the Sea, Dion recommended a large stuffed emperor penguin from the Bird Collection (though birds, they swim in the sea). For the Air, Kate

Carmody decided on a stuffed snowy owl in an action pose as if about to pounce on prey. Alison Gerber chose a dramatic, somewhat mysterious-looking elephant skull to crown the Cabinet of the Terrestrial Realm. Lisa Arnold placed a bronze sculpture of a young girl from the Weisman collection on top of the Cabinet of Humankind as a subversive statement about a young female standing for "mankind." Jean Tretter displayed the large medieval antiphonary, a book of sacred church music, open to a page, on top of the Cabinet of the Library or Archive. To represent the Cabinet of the Allegory of Vision, Annie Johnson selected a graceful stuffed peacock, its tail feathers, with their "eye" designs, draped over the top shelf. John Knuth settled on a large nineteenth-century French clock, featuring a figure of a female muse with lyre, to top the Cabinet of the Allegory of Sound and Time. Cassie Wilkins chose a common classroom globe, circa 1950, to represent the world of history above the Cabinet of the Allegory of History.

Cocurator Kate Carmody examines loan objects in the art study room at the Weisman Art Museum.

After deciding on all objects we wanted for the exhibition, we moved into the next phase: the formal loan requests for the objects and their physical movement to the Weisman Art Museum. This aspect of museum exhibition work usually remains invisible to the public but requires significant staff time, labor, and resources. We worked with our registrar's office to develop loan requests for each object to the relevant university department or collection curator. This daunting task was handled with aplomb by Weisman registrar Karen Duncan, even though she cringed at the prospect of borrowing more than seven hundred objects from fifty-one different sources. The fact that all collections were at the University of Minnesota, along with the able assistance of the student curators, helped to make these tasks less of a registrar's nightmare.

Then began all of the activities required for the movement of objects from their storage spaces to the museum. Official loan forms were prepared, sent, signed, and returned. Curators pulled and packed their objects. Museum crew carefully handled the packing of objects into the museum van for transport to the Weisman. Objects were unpacked and temporary storage determined. Then more records were

Art crew preparator Steve Ecklund installs a zebra head on the salon wall.

generated to acknowledge receipt of each object. Each piece was examined for its condition and records made, including photographs. Our staff quickly learned how to describe the condition of objects they had never worked with before, such as mastodon tusks and pinecones. They made plans for dealing with biological materials, substances that art museums usually try to keep out of galleries because of possible problems with infestations of insect pests, bacteria, or molds. For one month, the Weisman's Louise and Malcolm MacCannell Art Study Room was filled with minerals, hats, purses, plants, jars of fish, and a whole array of objects unusual for an art museum. Seen from outside the museum by students and others passing by who made casual glances or studied observations through a large window that looks into the art study room, these things signaled a reordering of the art museum.

Art crew preparator Steve Ecklund made pickups at forty different loading docks, seeing a view of the campus that few others had considered. Like many other aspects of this project, his work made visible hidden areas of the institution, its infrastructure, and the network of relationships built through this collaboration. Steve humorously proposed to create a new map, "Loading Docks of the University of Minnesota." His joke was not really far-fetched: we *were* creating a new map of the campus, linking buildings, objects, and people to the Weisman. All of these efforts set the stage for the next phase—installing the cabinets.

Until the curatorial group gathered in February 2001 to begin installation of the cabinets two weeks prior to the exhibition opening, no one knew exactly how the *Cabinet of Curiosities* would turn out. We often referred back to slides of the Wexner Center's installation, but we had decided to take our own path

Mark Dion, with cocurators Annie Johnson and Cassie Wilkins, installing the Cabinet of the Allegory of Vision.

and not simply replicate what Dion and Bill Horrigan had done before. Our group had not worked with the tools common for more conventional art exhibitions, such as computer-generated layouts with precise placements for each object or three-dimensional models of galleries and objects. Some students made drawings of their cabinets with objects in preliminary placement; they had ideas of what would be on each shelf, but the exact location of each object and the true capacity of each shelf had to wait until the actual hands-on installation in February.

This element of the unknown and uncertain in installation art lends high expectations and anticipation to the installation process, as well as a little nervousness. It also is a time of great creativity, as months of research, reflection, discussion, and planning finally come to fruition. We shifted our thinking now to focus on the formal arrangements of objects in cabinets, on shelves, and on the salon wall. We considered how to maximize the visual impact of the objects for viewer pleasure and wonderment. There would be no descriptive label for each object, only lists of names or titles. During the installation weeks, Dion worked side by side with the students as we lined the gallery, working from carts that held the objects, carefully handling things and deciding on proper and safe display techniques. The Weisman's exhibition crew (Mark Kramer, Tim White, and Steve Ecklund) worked with us to handle and install, devising ingenious techniques for mounting eyeglasses on the back walls of a cabinet or protecting mushrooms and fungi from dust or preventing possible theft of the meteorite.

After two weeks of collaboration between Dion, the students, and the Weisman crew in installing the 701 objects, *Cabinet of Curiosities* was finished. We rejoiced at the visual intricacy and beauty of our design, feeling that we had succeeded in creating a work of art rich in physicality, meaning, intrigue, and wonder. For the next three months, we enjoyed observing and speaking with museum visitors, ranging from university students and faculty to grade-school classes, couples and families, museum staff from other institutions, and adults from the Twin Cities community, as they marveled at the display.

Although we had developed ideas about what we, as curators, were aiming for as we worked throughout the research phase, we all found new meaning in the installation once it came into physical

Annie Johnson installs the Cabinet of the Allegory of Vision.

reality and then moved into its public phase. As with the Renaissance cabinets, there was no fixed meaning for our installation. Rather, there were multiple—in fact, infinite—readings that could be made by viewers, depending on how they interpreted individual objects and what connecting threads they made from one object to the next. The visitors became active makers of meaning for the installation, forging their own connections among things.

Another reference for considering the possible meanings of this work is the practice of installation art. Installation art offers a three-dimensional environment that involves and at times might engulf the viewer, engaging tactile, spatial, and sometimes aural and olfactory as well as visual perception. Yet for all its physicality, much installation work also has a conceptual base. Contemporary cultural theorist Fredric Jameson has offered a useful notion of conceptual art:

> Conceptual art may be described as . . . an occasion of what first seems to be an encounter with a work of art of some kind, the categories of the mind itself—normally not conscious, and inaccessible to any direct representation or to any thematizable self-consciousness or reflexivity—are flexed, their structuring presence now felt . . . by the viewer like musculature or nerves of which we normally remain insensible.[18]

Following Jameson's formulation, Dion's work is grounded in a conceptual base. It offers the opportunity to become aware of the musculature of the mind—to flex the mind—while also offering aesthetic, spatial, visceral, and sometimes playful experiences. These multitudinous dimensions were certainly true of the Weisman's *Cabinet of Curiosities*. American poet Wallace Stevens's poem "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" (1917) conveys the idea that a thing or image cannot be described or pinned down from one perspective, and the poem mimics a cubist painting by showing multiple views of its subject. Similarly, the poem suggests reading the cabinets akin to this multiview perspective.

Most readily, the installation could be regarded as a representation of how a university produces knowledge through things, revealing the deep history of this practice and referencing its roots in Renaissance thought, when major collections were first amassed as a new kind of evidence. The installation

Cabinet of Curiosities, Weisman Art Museum.

could also be seen as one version of the history of the University of Minnesota. This was not a "greatest hits" of university collections or history, displaying the most significant, most valuable, oldest, or most rare objects. Rather, our selections showed our own interests, values, and biases as well as what was possible to accomplish under our circumstances and depending on what curators were willing to lend. For example, nothing represented recent University of Minnesota Medical School achievements or activities, even though that school is one of the most prestigious areas of the institution, and there were several possible reasons for this omission. In response to our queries, medical staff claimed that they do not collect things. They may have been unwilling to share what they do collect; or, as one connection in the medical school suggested, they develop techniques, not objects that could be displayed. Similarly, our representation of the study of birds at the university was distorted because we showed the anomalies of the collections—the taxidermied birds, not the primary evidentiary base of study skins. As happens in much of Dion's other work, the limits of our collection should call into question for viewers the completeness or the representativeness of our reconstruction of the university. This points to the fact that any classification system or system of description or representation is partial, flawed, and biased.

The cabinets could also be read as an effort to reimagine the organization of knowledge. By bringing together objects from history, music, art, design, literature, biology, geology, and other disciplines, we recreated a world of knowledge as conceived prior to the division into disciplinary categories. The installation thus embodied physically the kinds of connections scholars today are trying to forge through interdisciplinary work.

By using themes rather than disciplines to organize objects and knowledge, resulting in surprising juxtapositions, *Cabinet of Curiosities* also upsets our reading of artifacts, or the semiotics of objects and images. If the project of the Enlightenment with its Linnaean charts of classification was an attempt to pin down and codify relationships between species in a formal taxonomy—a model influential in other disciplines (e.g., art history, with its lineage of artists and art movements, or in canons of literary figures

Cabinet of the Sea.

and movements)—the cabinets dislodged a sense of certainty of meaning for any one object in the display. They disrupted the semiotics of things, throwing meaning into a much wider net, depending on how a viewer read one thing in relation to another. In this schema, meaning is created by a viewer and through relationships between things; it does not reside in individual objects. The interpretive process is as much a poetic act, employing allegory and association, as it is a rational one.

The cabinets also made an effort to stimulate museum visitors to make connections among things not usually considered together. Viewers could take innumerable different paths through the exhibition (walrus head, zebra head; world's tiniest seed, and so on), depending on their knowledge, interests, and inclinations; each person's experience of the installation was singular. This feature of the cabinets—visitors' choices to shape and direct their own museum experiences—is an issue under discussion in current museum practice. Through an archaic style of museum display we achieved something that

museums today are struggling to reinvent, suggesting (ironically) the possibility of the cabinet of wonder as an important new model for museum exhibitions.

Conceptions of nature are central to Dion's work, and so was the case in this project. With the walrus head in the art museum and the overall mingling of natural specimens with cultural artifacts in the installation, Dion reminds us that our ideas about nature are always part of culture. Having the walrus head, zebra head, alligator, jars of fish, freeze-dried cow's lung, hissing cockroaches, and other specimens in an art museum expressed the idea that our views of nature are embedded in culture. Alternately, the installation's biological materials subtly commented that culture is also inextricably part of nature. That claim refutes the art museum's attempt to construct a universal and timeless space in opposition to nature and biological processes, seen in efforts to banish bugs and other pests, or to control temperature and humidity in order to stop natural decay or wear of materials.[19] Dion's art asserts that biology and culture are inextricably linked and cannot be divorced from each other. This point was vivid in a project in Chicago, *Roundup: An Entomological Endeavor for the Smart Museum* (2000). He and his volunteers searched for and collected all forms of insect life they could find in the Smart Museum building at the University of Chicago; Dion identified and photographed the discoveries and then displayed these as part of the installation.[20]

Another reading of the cabinets and salon wall could be that they physically represented the new connections forged across University of Minnesota departments that had not interacted previously. While some suspicions arose among curators as we conducted this work, overall positive new connections and relationships were created. I gained insight into this important aspect of Dion's work when reading a roundtable discussion that took place via fax in which Dion engaged with artists from several countries, including South African William Kentridge and Italian Cesare Pietroiusti. Commenting on the importance of context to Dion's work, Pietroiusti said:

> Making an artwork related to a certain context does not necessarily mean to exercise "institutional critique," and Mark's work is a good example, but I believe to experiment a situation among persons, *those persons,* a situation that was not already there, and that hopefully will contribute to create spaces for critical thought.[21]

This project created opportunities for the students and curators to initiate and negotiate connections that did not exist before. The physical piece embodies these relationships, just as the historical cabinets represented relationships between Europeans and other cultures. In most museums and exhibitions, these relationships remain hidden or are quietly noted on labels—unless acknowledging a major donor.

New relationships also reached into the wider community beyond the University of Minnesota campus. These connections were expressed most vividly by the miniature cabinets created by JoAnne Toft's fourth- through sixth-grade students from Marcy Open School in Minneapolis, one of the Weisman's school partners. Students came to see the Dion cabinets and then created their own. They invented their own themes with intriguing concepts such as "magic," "transparent things," "beach," "imagination," and "senses." Then they collected objects and arranged them in small wooden boxes. At the "Curious Collections" family day at the Weisman, two dozen students displayed their cabinets. They wrote touching letters to Dion, which revealed how deeply they absorbed the lessons of the cabinets. The Marcy students' cabinets appear like miniature, minimalist Joseph Cornell boxes, those evocative holders of memory.

But Dion's aesthetic is not that of Cornell even while his work references that artist's containers. Rather, Dion maximizes density, multiplying the assemblage and the avenues of associations. Through his *Cabinet of Curiosities* for the Weisman Art Museum and the Wexner Center for the Arts, Dion vividly reminds us that the microcosm of nature, culture, and history found in modern universities and museums reflects the worldliness of these institutions. In intricate and playful ways, Dion engages us as collaborators in alternate imaginings of the world, whether we are working alongside him in research and collecting or we are viewing his installations. His critical and creative stance reinvigorates our ideas about how knowledge is made through objects. In his installations of delightful physicality, Dion offers a serious

intellectual prospect—to imagine alternate ways of conceptualizing the museum, the university, and our world. These alternate views can enliven us with new visions and foster a healthy humility in the certainty of what we regard as truth.

Notes

1. Quoted from lecture by Mark Dion, "Loot, Souvenirs, and Trophies," at Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, September 21, 2000.

2. The bibliography of critical work and exhibition catalogues on Dion has grown rapidly since the late 1990s. An excellent overview of his work and thought through the mid-1990s is found in Lisa Graziose Corrin, Miwon Kwon, and Norman Bryson, *Mark Dion* (London: Phaidon Press, 1997). Other publications related to specific exhibition projects include *Natural History and Other Fictions* (Birmingham, England: Ikon Gallery, 1997); Alex Coles et al., *Archaeology* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 1999); Toby Kamps and Ralph Rugoff, *Small World: Dioramas in Contemporary Art* (San Diego: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2000); *Mark Dion: New England Digs* (Brockton, Mass.: Fuller Museum of Art, 2001); *Mark Dion: Full House* (Ridgefield, Conn.: The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, 2003); Richard Klein, ed., *Mark Dion: Drawings, Journals, Photographs, Souvenirs, and Trophies, 1990–2003* (Ridgefield, Conn.: The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, 2003); *Mark Dion: Encyclomania* (Nuremberg, Germany: Verlag für moderne Kunst Nürnberg, 2003).

3. Miwon Kwon interview with Dion, in *Mark Dion*, 8–9. See also Lisa Graziose Corrin, "Mark Dion's Project: A Natural History of Wonder and a Wonderful History of Nature," in *Mark Dion*, 63–65.

4. Kwon, 20.

5. See Corrin, 74–77.

6. See Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1992); Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); Alan Wallach, *Exhibiting Contradiction: Essays on the Art Museum in the United States* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998); Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); Neil Harris, "Museums, Merchandising, and Popular Taste: The Struggle for Influence," in Ian M. G. Quimby, ed., *Material Culture and the Study of American Life* (New York: Norton with the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1978); Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Press, 1994).

7. See American Association of Museums, *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums* (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1992), as well as publications from major conferences at the Smithsonian Institution: Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, eds., *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), and Ivan Karp et al., eds., *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992).

8. Krzysztof Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities: Paris and Venice, 1500–1800*, trans. Elizabeth Wiles-Portier (Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 1991), 9.

9. Susan M. Pearce, ed., *Interpreting Objects and Collections* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994); John Elsner and Roger Cardinal, eds., *The Cultures of Collecting* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994). See also Susan M. Pearce, *Museums, Objects, and Collections: A Cultural Study* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992); Werner Muensterberger, *Collecting: An Unruly Passion: Psychological Perspectives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Celeste Olalquiaga, *The Artificial Kingdom: A Treasury of the Kitsch Experience* (New York: Pantheon, 1998; reprint, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); Leah Dilworth, ed., *Acts of Possession: Collecting in America* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2003); Ingrid Schaffner et al., *Pictures, Patents, Monkeys, and More . . . : On Collecting* (New York: Independent Curators International, 2001); Mitch Tuchman, *Magnificent Obsessions: Twenty Remarkable Collectors in Pursuit of Their Dreams* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1994).

10. A landmark study is Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, eds., *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (London: Clarendon Press, 1985); published from an Oxford conference on the subject of cabinets of curiosities, it documents dozens of European collections. Contemporary interest in the cabinet is also seen in the major project that involved a series of conferences and an exhibition, *Microcosms*, organized by E. Bruce Robertson and Mark Meadow, art historians at the University of California–Santa Barbara. Robertson's essay in this volume provides information about that multiyear project.

11. See Hooper-Greenhill, 105–32; Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). Also see two books by Barbara Maria Stafford, *Voyage into Substance: Art, Science, Nature, and the Illustrated Travel Account, 1760–1840* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984) and *Artful Science: Enlightenment, Entertainment, and the Eclipse of Visual Education* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994).

12. For an excellent survey of the collecting impulse in contemporary art, see Ingrid Schaffner and Matthias Winzen, eds., *Deep Storage: Collecting, Storing, and Archiving in Art* (New York and Munich: Prestel, 1998).

13. Fred Wilson, *Mining the Museum: An Installation*, Lisa Graziose Corrin, ed. (New York: The New Press with The Contemporary, Baltimore, 1994). The best source on David Wilson's work is Lawrence Weschler, *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder: Pronged Ants,*

Horned Humans, Mice on Toast, and Other Marvels of Jurassic Technology (New York: Vintage, 1995). For artists' interest in the cabinet of curiosities, also see Natasha Nicholson, *Cabinets of Curiosities: Four Artists, Four Visions* (Madison, Wisc.: Elvehjem Museum of Art, 2000).

14. Kynaston McShine, *The Museum as Muse: Artists Reflect* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1999). For another survey of artists addressing the museum, see James Putnam, *Art and Artifact: The Museum as Medium* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001).

15. On installation art, see Mark Rosenthal, *Understanding Installation Art: From Duchamp to Holzer* (New York: Prestel Publishing, 1988); Nicolas de Oliveira, Nicola Oxley, and Michael Petry, *Installation Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994); *Installation Art: Blurring the Boundaries* (San Diego: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1997); Erika Suderburg, ed., *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); Nicolas de Oliveira, Nicola Oxley, and Michael Petry, *Installation Art in the New Millennium: The Empire of the Senses* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2003). For Fredric Jameson's ideas about spatialization, see "Postmodernism and Utopia," in *Post-Utopia: Configurations of Nature and Culture in Recent Sculpture and Photography* (Boston: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1988), 14–15.

16. Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (New York: Praeger, 1973), 6; quoted in Suderburg, 2.

17. Roland Nachtigaller, "Between a Stage and a Lab—Mark Dion's 'Field Stations' in Public Places," in *Mark Dion: Encyclomania*, 54–57.

18. Jameson, "Postmodernism and Utopia," 14–15.

19. On the modernist space of the art museum and its attempt to create a universal space divorced from nature and time, see Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Santa Monica: Lapis Press, 1986). Fred Wilson also addresses the modernist museum as a cultural and time-based concept in *Mining the Museum*.

20. See Stephanie Smith, ed., *Ecologies: Mark Dion, Peter Fend, Dan Peterman* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press with the David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, 2001).

21. Copy of faxed correspondence that Dion shared with the author in 2001.

A Conversation with Mark Dion

BILL HORRIGAN

Mark Dion, *Cabinet of Curiosities for the Wexner Center for the Arts* (1997). Photograph copyright Richard K. Loesch.

MARK DION'S *Cabinet of Curiosities for the Wexner Center for the Arts* was on view on the campus of Ohio State University in Columbus from May 10 to August 10, 1997. In an attempt to reconstruct how this remarkable exhibition came about, Dion and I, more than six years later, engaged in a series of faxed communications, narrating the process as we recalled it. As both of us comment here, the Wexner exhibition was never intended to travel to other venues, so its eventual reconstitution at the Weisman Art Museum, or anywhere else, was hardly a consideration for either of us during the almost two years we prepared for the exhibition in Columbus. The following edited transcript draws from our written communications between August and December 2003.

Bill Horrigan: One of the attractions for me in preparing for what would become *Cabinet of Curiosities for the Wexner Center for the Arts* is that it would allow me in some fashion to connect the Wexner Center to Ohio State University (OSU) in general, particularly those parts of OSU having no logical relation to the Wexner Center and its mandate—science departments, for example. When your exhibition was being planned and executed (1995–97), the Wexner's presence on the campus of OSU was still intermittently freakish within the overall ecology of OSU. Up until the Wexner was established in 1989, OSU

did not have much of a high profile for supporting the creation and presentation of contemporary art. That, paired to the fact of OSU being one of the two or three largest universities in the country (based on enrollment size as well as physical footprint), made it interesting for me, conjecturally, to initiate a project with you whereby we'd both force the issue of collaboration between the Wexner and OSU—and, in that way, at least for the duration of the exhibition and, ideally, residually into the future, *demonstrate* the logic of the Wexner's existence vis-à-vis OSU, the stereotyped, football-obsessed Big 10 monolith, by incorporating into an art gallery context a vast assortment of OSU's possessions.

So that's one of the things that interested me: working with an artist whose inventive mastery of the archive made him unique within contemporary art practice, and who would be able to track down odd objects ordinarily lacking public display, and ones reflecting on various aspects of the pedagogical mission of the university as a liberal idea and aspiration.

I honestly did not know what we would find, but did know, or strongly suspected, that an institution the size of OSU was almost certain to have a number of collections of objects once related to teaching or research but no longer credible as teaching devices. Some of these objects might now have become abject and forgotten (located in a broom closet, for example); some might be privately retained by faculty for sentimental or novelty value; some might be transferred to properly held research or archive or library vaults. Other objects would still be in occasional use. Some objects would remain as embodiments of ideas as well as practical teaching devices.

After you had produced the drawings with the detailed categories and articulated the conceptual grafting of the *wunderkammer* to the idea of the university (with its mission devoted to teaching "all that is worth knowing"), what then followed was essentially a series of tasks to locate objects corresponding to the declension of the argument as arrayed left to right in the nine cabinets.

My only role from that point on was to make initial cold calls throughout OSU, armed with the drawing and your CV, and to find cooperative collaborators. As I mentioned, part of my interest in doing this was missionary work on behalf of the Wexner Center, on behalf of a serious cultural exercise that would, among other things, draw attention to the source of the objects eventually displayed. That is, to let patrons know that OSU was a many-chambered vessel, with rare and fabulous objects dispersed among its many departments and programs.

You had done projects similar to this in the past, so I'm curious now as to why you were wanting to work within OSU in particular. One of my preoccupations since being here has been thinking about and trying to finesse the Wexner's relationship to OSU (beyond the bureaucratic levels), and I wonder to what, if any, extent that relationship animated you in attempting this.

Mark Dion: To a significant degree we shared a great deal in our initial attraction to the project. On one hand there was a sincere desire to attempt some sort of integration of the Wexner into the broader cultural network of OSU, and on the other hand there was the prospect of a sheerly pleasurable treasure hunt. From the start we expected to find at least three types of collections existing at the university: official collections for display, like the trophies, celebrity eyeglass collection, rare books, etc.; study collections like musical instruments, the herbarium, zoology collections, etc.; and things like technical apparatus teaching models, outdated technology that hung around too long to be tossed out. These orphan collections were the ones we were both most eager and curious to get our hands on; they often had no curators, and were stored in closets, under stairwells, or behind the cabinets holding other collections. This aspect of the project generated excitement not only for us but for the department heads as well.

Since we have a comically opposite relationship to material culture things, you being a bit of a purger and myself being an excessive pack-rat hoarder, we made a perfect comic team to explore the dusty vaults where people had squirreled things away. To add another comic element to the process, the gatekeepers to these collections often proved to be eccentric and exhibited a wide range of custodial

Mark Dion, *Theatre Mundi*, In Situ Gallery, Paris. Photograph courtesy of Mark Dion.

attitudes, from those who were glad to "unload the junk" to those who handled each object with white gloves. Most curators were intrigued by the notion that we were, temporarily at least, giving the loaned objects another function, a discursive life beyond being an instrument, or specimen, or rare and obsolete technology. For someone not coming from a museum background, the question of why keep a teaching model that no longer teaches must arise. This project at least provided a context that affirmatively suggested possibilities. In this sense we really did function as a goodwill ambassador for the Wexner Center, even more so since few of the people we met had even set foot in the museum building.

One initiating aspect of the project was thinking about parallels in the development of the university and the museum. I had been fascinated with the model of Renaissance collections or curiosity cabinets since the early 1990s, when I started to explore the history of natural history as a visual field of knowledge. I began to make works that employed aspects of the logic of the *wunderkammer* as a theory of the organization of the world: projects like the one I produced for Sonnsbeek '93 or *Scala Naturea,* which attempted to parody, in sculptural form, Aristotle's cosmology or hierarchical taxonomy. This desire to construct a microcosm seemed to me a convergent aspect of universities and museums; of course, the university and the museum share origins and seem to periodically part ways only to reunite later, but we now seem at the point of convergence again.

Mark Dion, *Biodiversity: An Installation for the Wexner Center for the Arts* (1990). Photograph courtesy of the Wexner Center for the Arts/Mark Dion.

BH: You were a bit familiar with the Wexner Center from the installation my former colleague in the media arts program, Jason Simon, had produced, a project you and Bill Schefferine presented here in April 1990, just six months after we had opened—*Biodiversity: An Installation for the Wexner Center for the Arts.* One of the aspects of that project that appealed to me was how it completely bypassed the usual constraints of the typical museum exhibition and appeared more as a kind of impersonation of a science fair project, with lots of wall text and graphics, charts, activist-related information about rain forest preservation, all framed by two potted trees and accompanied by daily screenings of documentary films. It was a kind of smuggling of information into a gallery space, but in a tone that was not in the main ironic. Plus, there was zero psychodrama in terms of producing an on-site project, none of the baggage that artists creating new work sometimes schlep along with them. Jason's and my department had at that point presented only one installation (Julia Scher's *Occupational Placement,* which was on view when we opened in November 1989), so the fact that you and Bill were such fun to have around probably spoiled me for projects I've done since then.

After Jason moved back to New York, you and I stayed in touch mainly through him and, if I remember, I think he was kind of persistent that I try to engage you to do a bigger gallery project. He kept saying that even though you were doing shows all around the world, you had yet to have a one-person American museum show, so when I was pitching the idea of doing something with you to my colleagues here, I would make that claim despite not actually knowing if it were true.

When you came back to the Wexner to start talking about the show and the curiosity cabinet idea emerged, one of my first thoughts was how different it would be from the *Biodiversity* project, which was virtually commodity-free. Assembling a curiosity cabinet is in many respects an accumulation of commodity, not an erasure of it. And you're right, as you noted, something in my own nature is threatened by

the prospect of object accumulation. I'm not by any means a minimalist; it's just that I chronically fail at the goal of not accumulating. So I'm always somewhere in the bottomless quagmire of giving and getting, spending and letting.

That led to further, mostly silent panic when I saw your prototype drawings—when I saw the "kinds" of things we would have to find within OSU. I never had a single doubt that OSU contained within its endless chambers enough suitable objects to correspond to the proposition the sequence of cabinets was making: the visual evolution of knowledge, the declension of objects that would correspond to how nature had come to be channeled into the scientific disciplines. I didn't doubt the stuff was all there, somewhere. I just got nervous about convincing dozens of OSU caretakers (almost all of them unknown to me at that time) to let us have them—to trust us, or to trust first me and then you, to protect their assets.

Part of the persuasion involved arguing that we would not only be protecting their objects but would be enhancing them, symbolically, by placing them into a context where they would be seen by people who otherwise would never see them, and by having at least some of those people gain an understanding of OSU's varied resources. The argument was in part that since most of the collections from which the objects were drawn did not as a rule have public display programs, the Wexner Center exhibition could display those collections in proxy form.

MD: I'm glad you mention *Biodiversity: An Installation for the Wexner Center for the Arts,* which has been a bit of a missing piece in my public chronology. Images of this work have never been published nor has it been written about; however, it typifies the concerns and methodologies of the work Bill Schefferine and I produced together. You're right, the work is not ironic but direct: we mean what we say. The collaboration Bill and I did and later in our individual work used irony as a tactic but in a broader strategy that was shamelessly didactic. In *Biodiversity* irony and humor were not the work's aim but rather the sugar to sweeten the bitter medicine, which in this case was a grim accumulation of ecological abuse. These works were also unabashedly angry, even if cool in their presentation. Bill and I were motivated by a sense of outrage at wasteful, idiotic criminality of environmental destruction. The more we researched and learned, the offense grew until it found a material form in the work we did together. *Biodiversity* was an attempt to share our research through an installation, video program, and hard-hitting pamphlet (our first publication). Our sense of urgency and indignation emerged from our idealism. It was activist in the sense that we naively imagined that the environmental crisis was an information crisis, and that if people had access to complex, critical, and correct information they would of course act responsibly. We underestimated the place of irrationality, desire, and greed in society. Works from this time represent our optimistic period.

After Jason left, you and I kept a correspondence going, and I was thrilled when the curiosity cabinet project materialized. While this was a remarkably different kind of project, the tone was also not ironic, and the process, although taxing, was mostly a great deal of fun. Each few weeks I would fly to Columbus and we would march off to some remote area of the university armed with the drawing and a serviceable sales pitch, detailing why the curators should give us the time of day. Often the drawing caused problems since some curators imagined we were looking for exact matches of drawn items: "I'm sorry, but we don't have a stuffed fox in that position."

While we were attempting to display the objects under the rubric of the microcosm, we also had to avoid being a cheerleader for OSU. Thus our museum necessitated a model different from chronology, or the separate disciplines, or the display of discrete treasures, which are methods the university would use to tell its "official story." This is why we altered the architecture of the entrance space and developed our curiosity cabinet model, based on nine allegories, arranged around a semicircular rotunda. We turned the gallery into an expression of hermetic philosophy's notion of the unity of macrocosm and microcosm, and placed the viewer at the center. The entrance with its two doorways was borrowed from the

Man with Six Fingers, daguerrotype, Cartoon Research Library, The Ohio State University. Photograph courtesy of the Floyd and Marion Rinhart Collection, The Ohio State University Libraries. Featured in *Cabinet of Curiosities for the Wexner Center for the Arts*.

Freemason mandate that one does not enter and leave the room from the same door, which of course represents a transition occurring while one is in the space.

We were conscious of not desiring to perform an overtly promotional function for OSU (this was also the case for the University of Minnesota), but our installation regardless had an undeniable relationship to high Renaissance cabinets, in which the materials gathered functioned as emblems of the cultural and social status of the individuals who amassed them. The installation also reflects the way that late Enlightenment collections of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (civic, social, and individual collections) tended to emphasize imperial reach, a hegemonic bourgeois worldview, and civic rivalry. Despite our caution, we unavoidably highlighted treasures of the university and showcased its extent to the four corners of the world and back through the depths of time. We even included a football.

The most fascinating aspect of the collections we encountered was the diversity of utility they arose from and the variety of locations they were housed in. Many collections were for study purposes, like those in Geology or Biology. Some collections were exquisite art objects, found in the Wexner's art storage, the library's Special Collections, or the Ceramic Department. Teaching models, tools, or industrial examples, both historic and contemporary, could be found in display cases throughout the campus, in the classrooms, or in places like the medieval history archive. Novelty collections like the celebrity eyeglass collection were housed in public display cases or on people's desks (snow globes, model cars, coffee mugs, etc.). Library collections were not limited to books; there were recordings in every format, sheet music,

maps, charts, picture collections. Private papers and personal effects of individuals of importance could be housed in a number of locations from the central archive to the colleges. Souvenirs and trophies were categories found mostly in the central university archives.

BH: We've mentioned "the drawings" a few times, so maybe I should clarify what that was. In planning the *Cabinet of Curiosities* exhibition, you made dozens of collaged renderings of your thoughts for the project, as well as countless detailed pencil drawings of each cabinet, and you meticulously filled each one with dozens of the kind of objects each cabinet would contain, with each cabinet dedicated to a different principle, a different point in the chain of argument you wanted the full ensemble of cabinets to simulate. I'll admit that when I first studied your drawings, I had some anxiety about being able to locate objects exactly as you had rendered them, until you explained that the drawing was meant as a guide and as a reminder of the kinds of objects suitable to exemplify the principle of that particular cabinet. As the accumulation of objects actually began to take shape, it became clear that the interpretive range within the logic of each cabinet was flexible, and so, as you say, if we couldn't find "a stuffed fox in that position," well, some other creature could suffice.

That said, you obviously had some very fixed notions in your head of what would work and what wouldn't. Even after we had been rummaging around in various basements and closets on repeated visits, I retained a much vaguer sense of what would "work" and what wouldn't in terms of being appropriate for inclusion. At first I couldn't figure out how an object I might have found remarkable could strike you as less so, until I saw how your selection of objects adhered to a further principle, which had to do with the aggregation of objects in each cabinet maintaining a dialogue internal to that cabinet, objects speaking to objects, but also each cabinet speaking left and right, forward and backward, to the other eight cabinets. You wrote out a detailed inventory for every single item, each object on its own index card, detailing its source from within OSU plus any further catalogue information you could glean from that

Entrance to *Cabinet of Curiosities for the Wexner Center for the Arts.* Photograph copyright Richard K. Loesch.

Cabinet of the Underworld, *Cabinet of Curiosities for the Wexner Center for the Arts*. Photograph copyright Richard K. Loesch.

source, and I imagine going through that ever-accumulating card pile would suggest relationships, proximities, possible subconscious forces in the logic of your gathering.

I do remember the shock when Sarah Rogers, who was then our exhibitions curator, and I sat down with our registrar's team and discussed how they would be responsible for transporting each object from its OSU location into our art storage space, where it would be inventoried, have a condition report prepared, acquire a loan agreement, and so on, but in the end they managed it with good humor, and I'm pretty sure that it was by far the largest loan show the Wexner had presented up until that time.

In terms of exhibition design, you were very specific about how the cabinets needed to be situated within the gallery space. You designed an architectural framework consisting of a large wall with two identical entryways, each approached via wooden ramps (necessitated by ADA requirements for wheelchair access). After passing through the entryway, a visitor would be on a semicircular platform two feet high, with a wooden railing, and about five feet on the other side of the railing were the nine cabinets, arranged in a semicircle, moving from left to right in terms of the genealogy of ideas the cabinets were meant to illustrate. I was a bit apprehensive about that viewing distance—that it might be too far for viewers to actually see the objects in sufficient detail, or that people might break the railing by leaning on it to get a closer look. To be honest, I was glad the railing was there as a preventive measure, to thwart a viewer's temptation to touch any of the objects, especially because I had been so insistent to all the lenders that their objects would receive the most professionally attentive treatment while they were in our

Mark Dion, Cabinet of the Earth, *Microcosmographia, Cabinet of Curiosities for the University of Tokyo Museum* (2002). Photograph courtesy of Mark Dion.

possession; the last thing I would have wanted is for us to put any of those objects in jeopardy. I imagine those concerns might have informed your decisions about the architectural environment you designed, but I also know you wanted the overall exhibition design to have other levels of resonance, including the conceit of entering and leaving by separate passages.

MD: It is funny you mention setting the record at that time for the largest exhibition of loaned material by the Wexner, since I also hold that for the Weisman Art Museum, the University of Tokyo Museum (which also commissioned a cabinet of curiosities exhibit), and the Fabric Workshop and Museum for the project J. Morgan Puett and I just finished, *RN: The Past, Present, and Future of the Nurses' Uniform*. My sanity deeply depends on the goodwill of museum registrars. Each of the curiosity cabinet projects necessitated borrowing multifarious amounts of material culled from massive universities, but each also required that each object on loan be protected from the public. This condition dictated almost as much regarding the exhibition design as the architectural site. At the Wexner, the gallery was large and neutral, allowing for a rather baroque architectural intervention that generated meaning as well as created a barrier between the public and the objects. The Weisman space was a hallway gallery, a kind of transition space, so that installation became a preamble for the entire museum. This space also featured a long wall where we could display a great number of pictures and elements in a typologically complex salon hanging. The cupboards were arranged on the opposite wall in a straight line on a gray platform, which kept viewers at a distance.

The solution for the cabinet project curated by Dr. Yoshiaki Nishino, director of the University of Tokyo Museum, and Takayo Iida and Noriko Umemiya was to transform the entire second floor of the museum, actually constructing rooms rather than building a cupboard display system. I filled the museum with eight small museums, representing the allegories Air, Water, Earth, the Underworld, the Miniature and the Gigantic, Humankind, and the Office of Reason and Measure. This allowed Brian Purcell, my assistant, and I to control more variables like light intensity, wall color, sound, room size, and so on. Each

Realm of the Underworld, Realm of the Gigantic, *Microcosmographia, Cabinet of Curiosities for the University of Tokyo Museum.* Photograph courtesy of Mark Dion.

room environment was exactly designed for the collections I selected and gathered with Dr. Nishino's museum studies students. As with the Weisman project, the participants were my eyes and ears, the spies who infiltrated the orphan collections throughout the institution. They had less autonomy than the Weisman seminar students, who each curated one of the nine cabinets. *Microcosmographia, Cabinet of Curiosities for the University of Tokyo Museum* (2002) also had a political function in that it greatly assisted Dr. Nishino in his campaign to preserve the university's material culture. The foundations of his museum's collection were literally pulled out of university dumpsters by his own hands. He now sends his students on weekly trash raids to see what treasures are being discarded by indifferent or ignorant faculty. I willingly allowed myself to be used as propaganda to promote heritage conservation.

Getting back to the issue of having to protect the objects, there is something seminal here, a dilemma. If my purpose was to reintroduce curiosity as a paradigm for museums today, then keeping objects dimly lit and out of people's hands must be an obstacle. An often overlooked and underestimated aspect of the original cabinets of curiosities is how dynamic they were. Objects were handled, traded, closely examined. Often a visit to a collection would have been entirely mediated by the proud collector. New technologies would have been demonstrated; experiments would take place; live animals could be present among the preserved ones. My curiosity cabinet works are *nature morts,* perhaps more akin to the representations of pre-Enlightenment collections than the collections themselves. Obviously I am not trying to re-create a specific collection, nor am I trying to capture the spirit underlying encyclopedic gatherings. My approach is far less pure, precise, and overdetermined. I am not a reenactor nor am I nostalgic. There are many aspects of the way we treat things in museums that make it difficult to approximate the participatory aspects of early collections. The most I can do is hint at this dynamic element through the intersections of four aspects I do control—exhibition content, architecture, display

Realm of the Miniature and the Gigantic, *Microcosmographia, Cabinet of Curiosities for the University of Tokyo Museum*. Photograph courtesy of Mark Dion.

furniture, and display techniques, along with the arrangement of the exhibited artifacts. Of course, another way to look at it would be to refocus the participation to the seminar students, who did handle the objects and had close relationships with the material at the University of Minnesota and the University of Tokyo. The project at the University of Tokyo was perhaps even more successful than the others in giving the collections a newly acquired epistemological status by the sheer extremity of the juxtapositions, display stations, and architecture.

BH: Returning to the origins of this project at the Wexner Center, one of the factors in the decision to do an exhibition here is whether it has the potential to travel to other sites, other museums, and it seemed clear to me from the outset that the curiosity cabinet project was going to be fundamentally site-specific—that is, it was going to use OSU itself as the object of inquiry. We would build the cabinets here, configure them in relation to the gallery space, and acquire the loaned objects solely for their presentation here, within the university's confines.

At the same time, using the curiosity cabinet tradition as an exhibition template, both materially and discursively, continues to be of interest to artists, and of course, as you have already described, that tradition remains persistently invoked in your own work. So when my friend Colleen Sheehy at the Weisman made inquiries about our exhibition with you, it was clear we couldn't "travel" the show but also that they could develop a project with you building on what you had done here at Ohio State as a model of one way of maneuvering within the material culture of a large public university. At the Weisman, you ended up pursuing that investigation according to a different way, with expressively different results. The nine

wooden cabinets we built for the project here were sent to Minnesota, but otherwise, after that, you in effect wrote new rules of the game.

The cabinets themselves became just one set of devices within the larger expressive effects of the exhibition. Here, they were joined by the oddity of the viewing mise-en-scène (different entrance and exit doors, for example, and the viewing platform a certain distance from the encased objects), whereas at the Weisman the natural orderliness of the cabinets was exploded by the abundance of materials on the facing walls—a sense of explosion there versus one of containment here. But the cabinets themselves were sustained as remarkably supple, evocative, resonant vehicles for presentation, edification, exposure. Once they made their way from Ohio to Minnesota, they could take on a new life, whatever life you wanted to breathe into them.

MD: The issue of turning a project that is fundamentally site-specific into a traveling exhibition seems an insurmountable problem. What we really traveled was a methodology. It is true we relied on the same cabinets, although reconfigured for a different space. These cupboards have proved to be a frame or, rather, armature of remarkable flexibility. In many ways they recapitulate the way objects are stored, as much as the methods with which they are displayed. Yet, like any frame, they are not neutral. I had them constructed with precision in order to evoke a very particular sensibility. The scale of the nine cabinets is critical to the work's success; since the piece creates its own space, it is essentially architectural. The *Cabinet of Curiosities* project is a hybrid of still life, architecture, installation, and museum archaeology.

The major difference between the Wexner and Weisman cabinets was the participation of the students. At OSU, we opened the project to the art school, but there were no takers, with the exception of the wonderfully resourceful and diligent Tassy Thompson, who curated the Library/Archives cabinet. I was concerned that the approaches in Minneapolis and Tokyo not become formulaic, based on the Ohio experience. Although this formula could yield results, it would not be interesting enough to keep me going. I need each project to be dynamic in order to maintain my level of engagement.

Colleen Sheehy and I developed a seminar to examine the origins of museums, with a focus on the contemporary collections that the university hosts. The students were assigned readings, wrote papers, came to lectures, and visited collections. They were rigorous, enthusiastic, and talented. I taught one class each month, so Colleen took on the lion's share of class work. Once we knew the seminar participants were remarkable enough, we asked them each to curate the objects in one of the nine cabinets. They culled objects from various collections, took on serious research responsibilities, and had to negotiate the allegorical category of their cabinet. Colleen and I were responsible for the overall bureaucratic and aesthetic aspects of the project, including the salon wall, and I installed the cabinets with the assistance of the seminar participants. They shaped the piece to a great extent by selecting the raw material. They were in fact collaborators. This experience of reliance on student participation was also a cornerstone at the University of Tokyo, since the students there functioned as my agents. As with many of my projects, the curators, assistants, and participants dramatically shaped the final piece; they are a fundamental aspect of the site.

This situation of collaboration introduces an aspect of contingency that is something my work has always flirted with. It is a strategy to keep things fresh and challenging for me. I've been focused on related ideas for a dozen years, and my methodology is well established, so working with students and other collaborators is like taking a vacation from myself. It's a way of challenging my way of doing things. The students are often attracted to very different objects than I would likely select.

BH: Over many years now, you've employed the cabinet of curiosities in different forms—not only in these specific iterations of the cabinet at Wexner and Weisman—as an important structure for presenting artifacts and knowledge. Do you feel that it continues to offer valuable modes of inquiry into the history

Cabinet of the Allegory of Sound and Time, *Cabinet of Curiosities for the Wexner Center for the Arts.* Photograph copyright Richard K. Loesch.

of knowledge, of museum history, and of installation? Do you expect that you will continue to use this as an organizing method to explore your interests in collecting, display, knowledge, and institutions?

MD: I remain somewhat uncertain as to if I can continue to work in the method of these projects. Clearly the way of negotiating the collections evolved from the Wexner to the Weisman to my project at the University of Tokyo, and while some aspects overlap, the installations and processes were remarkably different. In each situation, I learned a great deal, encountered wonderful helpers and advisors, and had a stimulating and fun time. That of course helps to keep me motivated to work so hard.

The cultural landscape has shifted in interesting ways since the early 1990s, when I became interested in the ideas of early collections. Back then little had been published on the cabinet of curiosities phenomena, and what there was proved difficult to find. Only a few people seemed engaged with the concerns of early collections, the most exceptional being David Wilson and the people around him at the Museum of Jurassic Technology in Los Angeles. David's commitment and brilliance have been an inspiration not just for me but for an entire group of artists on the margins of the "art world." The work of

Rosamond Purcell was also important. Of course in Europe there was the Château d'Oiron, curated by Jean-Hubert Martin, and Michael Fehr's direction at the Karl Ernst Osthaus Museum, as well as Gerhard Theewen's publishing of *Salon* and *Salon Verlag*.

Now it seems that the paradigm of the curiosity cabinet has become remarkably familiar. Numerous academic and popular works on the topic have appeared—even a coffee-table art book. We could fairly say that the model has been rescued from the dustbin of history. Even very official and safe institutions, such as the Smithsonian, have tried their hand with the cabinet. So it would seem that the goals of those of us who desired to revive aspects of the model somehow were fulfilled. Yet many of the attitudes toward these cabinets merely reenact them, or constitute them only as a historical model rather than as a living one. Perhaps as long as there remain aspects of the openness, the phantastical and marvelous, and the dynamic, which are still unattainable within the conventions of existing practice, then there will still be good reason to use the methods developed with these projects at Ohio State University, the University of Minnesota, and the University of Tokyo.

Bill Horrigan has been media arts curator at the Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State University since the center opened in 1989. He directs the center's active film and video program and curates gallery exhibitions. In addition to working with Mark Dion on *Cabinet of Curiosities* at the Wexner Center in 1997, his exhibitions include *Shirin Neshat: Two Installations* (2000), Chris Marker's *Silent Movie* (1995), and filmmakers Todd Haynes and Christine Vachon's first installation, *Domestic Violence* (1996). He is a frequent contributor to arts and media journals, including *Art + Text, Afterimage, The Independent*, and *Grand Street*.

Curiosity Cabinets, Museums, and Universities

E. BRUCE ROBERTSON

WHAT DO WE LEARN from a re-creation of a curiosity cabinet in a museum in a university? What do we learn from the conjunction of such historically distant entities as a sixteenth-century curiosity cabinet and a twenty-first-century university? And what is the university doing with all this stuff? Or even, what is it doing with a museum?

As my title suggests, this essay connects three very different social and historical institutions: the curiosity cabinet, the museum, and the university. Presented with these terms, most historians would draw a line connecting the curiosity cabinet (the first universal collections, dating from the sixteenth century) to the modern museum, but the connection would be of a limited kind. It would underscore the similarity that both contain material collections, but would quickly enumerate a series of disconnects: the curiosity cabinet was private, the museum public; one was irrational and haphazard, the other orderly and systematic; one was merely pleasurable and personal, the other educational.

Most historians would find it difficult to connect either the curiosity cabinet or the museum to the modern university. To be sure, the university might accidentally, as it were, contain museums as part of its fossil record, or in the same way one has pickled frogs to dissect for the benefit of students, but these seem increasingly incidental to the meaning and function of the university to most academics. Universities may be public institutions but they are of restricted access, unlike museums, which are open to all. Museums may claim to be educational but that is really smoke and mirrors compared to the real thing that universities offer. At heart, perhaps, the difference might be the sense that museums are repositories of knowledge, while universities are producers of knowledge. Universities are the cutting edge of scholarship and research, while museums trail behind, the one the epistemological lawn mower, the other the bag for the clippings.

But it is just on this issue—knowledge production—that all three institutions share a profound connection of great historical importance for understanding the nature of museums and universities today, as well as into the future. Indeed, the curiosity cabinet stands as a direct and intimate ancestor to both the museum and the university. The connection is composed of three parts: the modes of knowledge production; its means (through material evidence and the arrangement of that evidence); and the spaces of knowledge production. A simple thought experiment may illustrate this point. Imagine, if you will, a Universal Museum of Knowledge. Its holdings encompass all disciplines, all fields of research, and all possible objects. Students and scholars travel from near and far to study its collections, to learn from the resident staff, and to perform their own research. Unlike in almost all other museums, visitors to the exhibition halls of the Universal Museum of Knowledge are not restricted to passive viewing and reception of predigested knowledge, but may actively manipulate the objects, move them about the rooms, perform research on them. In fact, the distinctions of display space, laboratory, classroom, and library are almost nonexistent.

This is a vital arena for knowledge production, in which the museum continually refashions itself in response to the epistemological flux of the activities taking place within its confines. The Universal

Museum of Knowledge is not imaginary, although it is today invisible. In the sixteenth century, museums such as this were called curiosity cabinets or *wunderkammern*. They gathered together a wide variety of objects to function as a microcosm of the macrocosm, to represent the knowable world through physical manifestations of that world. Once compiled, they were studied, analyzed, acted on, and discussed. Today, only one such space remains in the world: the university.

This is not self-evident. In the university today, the primary mode of knowledge production, in the humanities at least, is textual: libraries are central, generally enormous edifices, and librarianship is a separate and highly specialized profession. Object collections, on the other hand, are dispersed and virtually invisible to outsiders: the official museum collections are the tip of the iceberg of the specimens and artifacts owned by the university. Moreover, physical collections have begun to be discounted as sites of knowledge production, unlike the laboratory for the sciences, fieldwork for the social sciences, the library and archive for the humanities. Instead they tend to be conceived of as repositories—or at least that is what many academics would believe. The real situation is different.

I can make my case more easily by recounting a pair of exhibitions my colleague Mark Meadow and I created a few years ago in connection with a seminar, where we built a functioning curiosity cabinet and a modern display space from the material collections of the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB).[1] Indeed we strictly limited ourselves to what we could find on campus and did not rely on historical objects. Instead we were looking for objects analogous to those that were found in sixteenth-century curiosity cabinets; our intention was to create not a replica of a curiosity cabinet but a collection that might function in a similar way, to the best of our understanding. We found it remarkably easy to find these objects. There was virtually nothing that might have belonged to a sixteenth-century universal collection that we could not find, in some comparable form, on our campus. Likewise, there was virtually nothing that we could find in the university that had not been represented in these earlier collections. To be sure, a sixteenth-century collector did not know about electricity and radioactivity, but did understand the importance of energy production and the machines necessary for it—and models would have been collected.

We also had two further aims. One was to demonstrate, on a campus less than fifty years old, that the modern university typically contains object collections as large as or larger than its text collections. The lack of a central object catalogue had not inhibited extraordinarily active accumulation. The second aim was to demonstrate that knowledge was as materially bound as it was textually and to suggest that, just as modern objects were comparable to those in curiosity cabinets, so might the patterns of knowledge production be similar.

Our hunt for objects found them pervasive and undifferentiated, in a seamless progression from classroom to department to laboratory to collection. The accumulation of specimens and artifacts is often seen as a by-product of research and teaching, but the objects are in fact critical and inevitable and usually essential to these activities. Knocking on doors around the university, we did not find one department that did not house objects—whether they were actively used in research or teaching or maintained as historic or totemic artifacts. And this was aside from the two formal museums on campus, the art museum and life sciences museum.

The Institute for Theoretical Physics claimed to have no objects: "We need only pencils and yellow paper pads." But the Institute housed a large collection of contemporary prints, as well as gifts from prominent foreign physicists that were too valuable for their sentimental (and institutional) histories to be tossed away. These accumulations were growing fast in every department, and lack of space was an issue. In response to our initial e-mail, many wanted to give us junk and clear out storage spaces. Here we began to participate in the process termed by Michael Thompson "rubbish theory," by which objects lapse from usefulness into trash, are discarded, but then, should they survive, are gradually rehabilitated into valued status as historical objects.[2] Even those collections that were not junk but active research collections were virtually hidden. One senior administrator had not heard of the Museum of Systematics

Entrance to *Microcosms: A University Collects*, E. Bruce Robertson and Mark A. Meadow, curators, University Art Museum, University of California–Santa Barbara (1995). Photograph courtesy of Mark A. Meadow.

and Ecology, which was in the division he oversaw. Younger members of the Geology Department did not know about the formal, named mineral collection housed by their own department.

The exhibition appeared to underscore the effect of a jumble that our hunt had uncovered through the bizarre juxtaposition of an elk's head and a plastic waveform that stood at the entrance. Such a pairing would seem to justify calling the curiosity cabinet irrational, for what possible rational purpose could put these two things together? In fact, this was the first of three pairings set up at the entrance in order to give the visitor the right cues to navigate the exhibition. In this instance the contrast lies between *naturalia* (nature) and *artificialia* (artifice), a fundamental distinction that was much explored in the sixteenth century. But the elk head was a studio model; instead of a living form, it was now a static artifact used for abstract purposes, while the waveform was part of a navy experiment to model wave motions, so its use points to the world of nature. Not incidentally, the waveform is also the emblem of University of California–Santa Barbara, a famous surfing school (alas), and thus serves as an appropriate first sign.

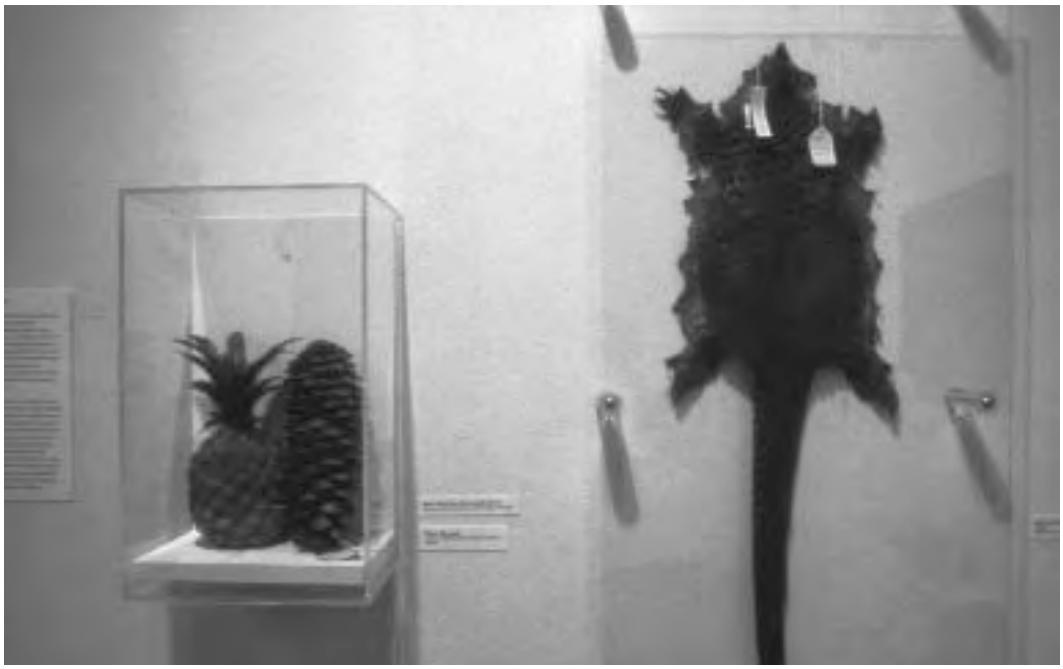
The second pair matched a seventeenth-century Flemish still life painting with a group of plastic fruit: the first belongs to the art museum, the second to the French Department, for use in teaching introductory French. Here different ideas of value form the contrast. First, the question of the different truth-value of representations: one is flat, one is three-dimensional, one is artistic, one not. One way to ask the questions raised here is, which is more realistic? The answer is, of course, neither and both. At the same time, another form of value might be considered: in terms of knowledge production, the still life is no more valuable than the fruit. In the university, unlike the art museum, the value of objects is determined by what they do and produce.

Still lifes, *Microcosms: A University Collects.* Photograph courtesy of Mark A. Meadow.

The third pairing was a skin from an African pangolin (somewhat akin to an armadillo) and a pinecone, with a pineapple thrown in. This kind of arrangement was common in sixteenth-century juxtapositions in what Mark Meadow calls "the Pangolin and Pinecone Effect": the pangolin skin has scales like the pinecone, and both serve the same purpose of armor and protection, revealing a hidden language of the natural world. Similarity of form arises from similarity of purpose. This leads, in turn, in the case of the pineapple, to etymological similarity.

Turning the corner, the visitor was faced with as intense and grotesque a space as we could conjure up, dominated by the cast of a T. rex skull from Paleontology. This main space was organized by typical sixteenth-century ordering systems: the four humors, four seasons, four continents, and so on. At the center of the room we set up the simplest of ordering systems, one of serious concern in the sixteenth century but which has now devolved to the level of a children's game: animal, vegetable, and mineral. The set of stuffed mouse, pinecone, and gypsum crystal was completed with something truly artificial: a computer disk drive. Surmounting the grouping was the human eye, surveying the entire room, underscoring that the curious eye of the spectator puts all this in motion. Indeed, this was the very point of the room: to demonstrate that a curiosity cabinet is ordered yet resists any simple, categorical ordering. The ultimate order of the curiosity cabinet is *produced* by each viewer through *association,* as each person puts together objects that make meaning and inspire original thought.

We, as organizers, certainly made decisions that suggested the beginnings of additional narratives. For example, we carefully chose russet brown objects for our central display in an attempt to undermine differences. But such accidentally created color similarities produced for our students and other visitors important meanings unintended by us. An array of objects, all black or white, was put together largely on the basis of chance and color (chance in that the only pedestal left was placed in the only blank spot): a marble bust of Dante, a photograph of swan specimens, and a stuffed raven. To one student this immediately suggested a lineage of poets: Dante, the Swan of Avon, and Poe's Raven. The most spectacular



The Pangolin Effect, *Microcosms: A University Collects.* Photograph courtesy of Mark A. Meadow.

section was the attempt to parody the famous print of Olaf Wurm's cabinet, with the Inuit costume replaced by its contemporary European equivalent, because Wurm is now as distant from us in time as the Inuit was to him in space.[3] But the request for an example of Elizabethan dress from the costume collection was interpreted literally. With the costume placed underneath a large *Tyrannosaurus rex* head, a dragon-headed woman stood opposite a skeletal Adam proffering her an apple.

Between them on the back wall was an eighteenth-century Chinoiserie cabinet with an odd metal object with the word "Art" scrawled on it. The metal artifact was part of a laser array. We came across it because we had gone to borrow a yellow submarine from the physics electronics shop, and the guys in the physics machine shop got wind of our visit and saved us this piece they were going to throw out. Just to let us know about it, and to remind themselves, they had written "Art" on it. This piece of serendipity records rubbish theory in action—the means by which many of these specimens enter in collections: as they lose value as instruments, they often are sentimentalized as historic artifacts, or sacralized as art objects. There is an enormous circulation of these artifacts, and those that do get rescued from the junk heap end up in formal collections, if only for a month or so. This one we returned to the trash after the exhibition.

We drew four lessons from this working model of a curiosity cabinet. First, we were able to reconsider the value of unexpected juxtaposition, the sense of disorder that seems most often to characterize curiosity cabinets. The curiosity they were seen to prompt has been deemed pointless, compared to the rational analysis promoted in the modern museum. But we found that when applying questions of difference and similarity—as outlined in the preamble to the exhibition—juxtaposition produced meaning, and hence knowledge. Still, the type of object that we associate with the curiosity cabinet seems bizarre. Sixteenth-century collectors were interested in the anomalous object, the one that prompted speculation about the dividing lines and boundaries between topoi and places. One of the fundamental differences between the nature of knowledge production in a curiosity cabinet and in a modern museum is topical order and categorical order. We place knowledge in the paradigmatic object, that which sits in the center of its category, not the object that sits in the margin. One might say we exist in a world of theoretical order, where the place of objects is determined by theoretical category, while in the sixteenth century a collector was more interested in the looseness of boundaries and order.

Microcosms: A University Collects (detail). Photograph courtesy of Mark A. Meadow.

An allied epistemological function lay in the mode of analysis, in that wonder (a boundary-disturbing reaction, unlike reason) was an appropriate analytical tool, as Francis Bacon, a figure who sits between the world of the curiosity cabinet and modern science, declared in the *New Organon:* "By rare and extraordinary works of nature, the understanding is excited and raised to the investigation and discovery of Forms capable of including them." The reciprocal but potentially competitive relationship between reason and wonder is recognized in Shakespeare's comment from *As You Like It*: "Feed yourselves with questioning; That reason wonder may diminish."[4]

Finally, this leads to the other principal difference: how one navigated these collections. The sixteenth-century mode was nonlinear, associational; the modern mode is linear, systematic, categorical. The main reason why the curiosity cabinet seems so fantastical to us today is because objects were not separated, as we understand it, like unto like—in fact, just the reverse was true. Through juxtaposition, often the odder the better, the viewer might be prompted to speculate, to wonder on the structure of the world. This order was not predetermined but lay waiting to be constructed by the active, engaged mind of the viewer. Today, in contrast, we think of museum objects as telling specific truths: the job of the visitor is to imbibe them. The objects are representative of the categories they rest in. Indeed, the strictly didactic function of museums often seems a little repressive.

Curiosity cabinets, of course, did not exist in the kind of timeless, ideal space that we re-created: they had a historical specificity that evolved over time. I don't want to untangle here the multiple origins of the curiosity cabinet or its many manifestations as *studioli, wunderkammern, schatzkammern,* and so on, but it is worthwhile to point to some highlights and commonalities. Virtually simultaneously in the first decades of the sixteenth century in Italy, as the historian Paula Findlen and others have described, collections of natural and local history were formed that mixed multiple kinds of objects together in order to study them. More often than not, these collections were gathered by university-trained men, or even faculty (Aldovrandi, one of the most famous natural history collectors, was professor of medicine at Bologna), or were quickly affiliated with a local academy or university.[5]

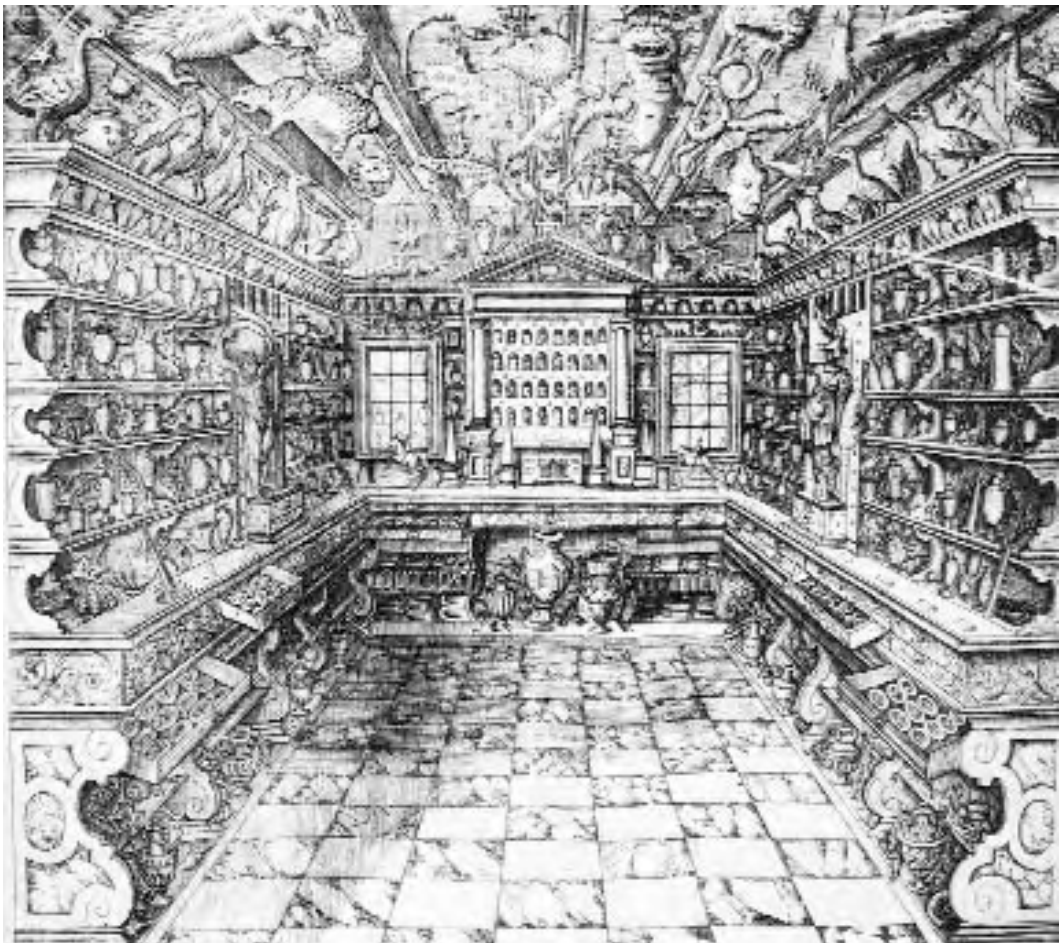
Perhaps the most famous (although near the end of this development) were those assembled in Rome, under the patronage of Alexander VII and directed by Athanasius Kircher in the middle of the

Microcosms: A University Collects (detail). Photograph courtesy of Mark A. Meadow.

seventeenth century. Curiosity cabinet collections are not easy to characterize but Kircher's is a model of many others. His collection contained everything from cameos to weapons, along with natural history specimens, biological to geological. It was composed of material from both near and far: Kircher took full advantage of his position at the center of the Catholic Church's immense trade networks and accumulated objects from throughout the world. He in turn traded specimens and catalogues with many collectors, including Protestant princes.[6] One of the reasons for the development of the curiosity cabinet was clearly the enormous expansion of the known world that occurred during the sixteenth century. The influx of exotic objects from all over the globe prompted Europeans to study what they had, what their history had left them, and what the new might be composed of. Fundamental then to the collecting activity was an implicit understanding of the need to compare and contrast these objects: knowledge was produced out of comparisons, such as the dividing line between *naturalia* and *artificialia*. It was just this kind of interest that led to the discovery of the true nature of fossils—which were long the subject of a debate as to whether they were artifacts, once living things, or an example of rocks imitating living nature—only possible when enough were collected together to be compared. Similar advances were made in ancient history, through numismatics, and in the natural sciences.[7]

North of the Alps, curiosity cabinets were associated more with merchants and princes. This development reaches its fullest first expression after 1560 in the cabinets of rulers such as Albrecht V in Munich and Emperor Rudolf II in Prague, in a form very different from such princely cabinets as Lorenzo de Medici's very private *studiolo*. The collection of Albrecht V is most interesting because we have an articulated statement of what it should be in what amounts to a job application from his librarian, Samuel Quiccheberg, to be curator of the new ducal collections. Quiccheberg's *Inscriptiones* of 1565 was an ambitious plan that divided the known world of things into five classes of objects, each subdivided into ten or eleven inscriptions. These ranged from portraits of the founder of the collection, to models of machines to chop logs into beams, to unusually durable clothing, to mention a few. It might be said that Quiccheberg's treatise is the first published work on museology.[8]

Quiccheberg's ordering system sounds initially like the famous definition quoted by Jorge Luis Borges from a Chinese encyclopedia, which organized animals as follows: (a) belonging to the Emperor;



Museum of Francesco Calceolari in Verona, 1622.

(b) embalmed; (c) tame; (d) sucking pigs . . . and so on.[9] But on closer examination, it resolves itself into a map of a macrocosm, rendered in a microcosm, beginning with God and the ruler who will be magnified by this collection, proceeding through artifacts (those things made by man) to the natural world (those things useful to man), to human instruments (the means for measuring and controlling the world), to art (the means for re-creating and representing it), ending, in the very last inscription, with the packing crates. Quiccheberg called this ideal cabinet a "theater of wisdom."

But the collection was only one aspect of Quiccheberg's plan. Albrecht V's collections sat within a system of schools, factories, armories, etc. All these activities were thought of as spinning out from the collections that reproduced them at the heart of Albrecht's kingdom. What we see here is Albrecht's attempt to get all the means of economically useful knowledge production under central control. A material collection was understood to be essential to this purpose: this was where philosophers might examine astronomical data; where miners could study ore samples; where engineers could analyze machine models, and so on. In the sixteenth century, the division between collecting and experimenting was barely formed; they were analogous activities, and, in many cases, one and the same. This marshaling of material evidence, to be acted on, explored, and, indeed, experimented on, is one of the major contributors to the formation of the laboratory.

Most modern disciplines may trace their roots to the site of collections, to the curiosity cabinet and its immediate heirs, the laboratory and the museum. One might point out the very real way in which Albrecht's cabinet was an attempt to gather new knowledge and guard it against the universities, which taught few

of these subjects (but the history of university collections is another matter). It has often been noted that modern science grows up outside the university (although there has been a lot of debate on this recently); what is just now being noticed is how it grows up around evidence accumulated in material collections. No serious scientific enterprise, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, was without its collection. And the great engine for change in the university faculties in the sixteenth century, primarily in historical research, law, and medicine, was a call for evidence, generally material evidence: the recovery of carved fragments of text, the examination of anatomy, the gathering of herbs for drugs.[10] The curiosity cabinet, then, was a space that combined all the normal research production spaces that we know: the laboratory, the seminar room, the library, the research collection. All of these are highly disarticulated and differentiated today, but in the sixteenth century they could be discovered, if not under one roof, at least under adjacent roofs, under central control. The only comparable such situation today is the modern university.

The re-created curiosity cabinet at the University of California–Santa Barbara had its twin in another space, a gallery that used modern display techniques with many of the same objects. These were displayed in a large, white space, with no crowding and large texts explaining the exhibition and demarcating each category. For all its apparent contrast and rationality, the exhibition made multiple pointed references to the first exhibition. For example, the exhibition was introduced by a set of four cases representing the four parts of the university: the Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Physical Sciences. In these cases, however, were all the same kinds of objects: an image, a vase, and a machine. In Humanities, there was a vase from the art museum and a revolver from Special Collections (supposedly used by Joaquín Murieta), while Physical Sciences had a computer chip and a vase given by a famous Russian physicist to the Institute for Theoretical Physics. In another section, one case held three-dimensional cube-shaped objects gathered from Chemistry, Geology, Art Studio, and Physical Education, while another had chicken skeletons from Geology, Biology, Art Studio, and Anthropology. Here again, like forms performed dissimilar functions in different disciplines.

Nonetheless, there are fundamental differences between how the objects in the modern collection and in a curiosity cabinet are used. Perhaps the most important concerns measurement as a fundamental tool of analysis. We chose two axes of measurement to examine and display: from the point of origin (or the first) and from the point of closest proximity (or the local). Both produced results that were surprising, once one examined the full range of disciplines. In a case devoted to "firsts," a first edition of Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* is much younger than the earliest fossilized life. Sometimes the first is a moving point: the case included a lineup of "first" hominid skulls, produced by both changes in interpretation of what constituted "hominid" and new discoveries. The local would seem to be more stable, but, as a case that displayed a specimen of a local skunk, a vial of oil from the major oil spill of 1969, and a bowl by local artist Beatrice Wood demonstrated, stable does not exclude odd or even bizarre. We also looked at the false consequences of measurement in a display of psychological tests acquired in the mid-1950s by the Psychology Department when it was established. These ranged from the Zondi Test for diagnosing neuroses (based on a system of facial expressions) to George Washington University's Social Intelligence Test, which included a page of photographs of typical GWU undergraduates, all in white shorts, all Caucasian, and all with crew cuts, looking virtually identical to museum viewers today but clearly distinguishable to most university members in the 1950s.

Conceived of materially, then, the modern university is revealed to be as strange a place as the curiosity cabinet, a fact we all know in our bones but do not like to admit. It proved relatively easy for us to produce a picture of the university from its material collections as eccentric as any sixteenth-century cabinet, without having to resort to any distortions. In other words, what looking at the material basis for the economy of knowledge in the university reveals, unlike the falsely decorous rows of books in the library, is that order and knowledge production are as arbitrary today as then—that is to say, the culturally produced nature of knowledge is nowhere more evident than when looking at its material bases.

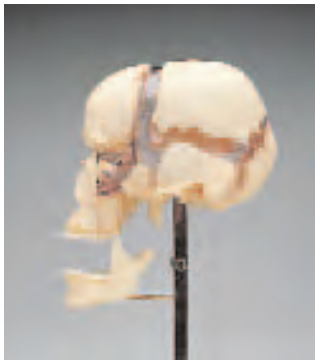
Cabinet of Curiosities

The nine cabinets are shown here in the order in which they appeared in the exhibition, from left to right.

Salon wall.

The nine cabinets of *Mark Dion: Cabinet of Curiosities*, Weisman Art Museum (2001).

Cabinet of
the Underworld.



Model of exploded human skull, Department of Anthropology Teaching Collection.

Second shelf, Cabinet of the Underworld.

Raven, Bird Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History.

Braided-hair watch fob with barrel-shaped ornament attached, The Goldstein Museum of Design.

Cabinet of the Sea.

Emperor penguin, Bird Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History.

Large marine clam shell, Invertebrates and Paleontology Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History.

Fish specimens in Cabinet of the Sea from the Fish Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History.

Cabinet of the Air.

Pink feather fan and paper fan with butterfly motif, Japan, The Goldstein Museum of Design.

Meteorite (fell in Fisher, Minnesota, on April 9, 1894), olivine-hypersthene, Meteorite Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics.

Snowy owl, Bird Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History.

Urandid moth, South America, Insect Collection, Department of Entomology.

Cabinet of the
Terrestrial Realm.

Hairy armadillo, skeleton mount, Mammal Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History.

Salamander, stained and cleared, Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History.

Bezoar (cow hair ball), Minnesota Historical Veterinary Museum.

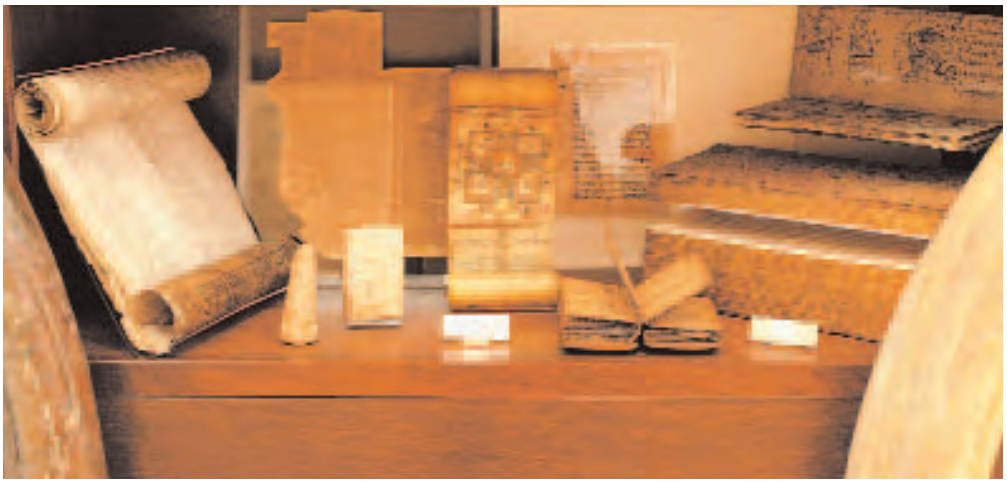
Cabinet of Humankind.

Shelf of oppression, Cabinet of Humankind.

Red lotus shoes, silk, China, c. 1900, The Goldstein Museum of Design.

Green knit garter-stitch beaded purse, c. 1900–1910, The Goldstein Museum of Design.

Cabinet of the
Library or Archive.



Antiphonary, in Latin, Venetÿs, L. A. Giunta, 1503, Special Collections and Rare Books, University Libraries.

Bottom shelf, Cabinet of the Library or Archive.

Cabinet of the
Allegory of Vision.

Model of the human eye, Department of Physics Teaching Collection.

Korean mask, date unknown, Weisman Art Museum.

Ivory owl, nineteenth century, Japan, Weisman Art Museum.

Microscope with box and accessories, early twentieth century, Owen H. Wangensteen Historical Library of Biology and Medicine.

Cabinet of the Allegory
of Sound and Time.

Shell horns, collection of Paul Haack, School of Music.

Clock with muse and lyre, nineteenth century, France, Weisman Art Museum.

Porcelain man and woman playing instruments, 1900, France, Weisman Art Museum.

Cabinet of the
Allegory of History.

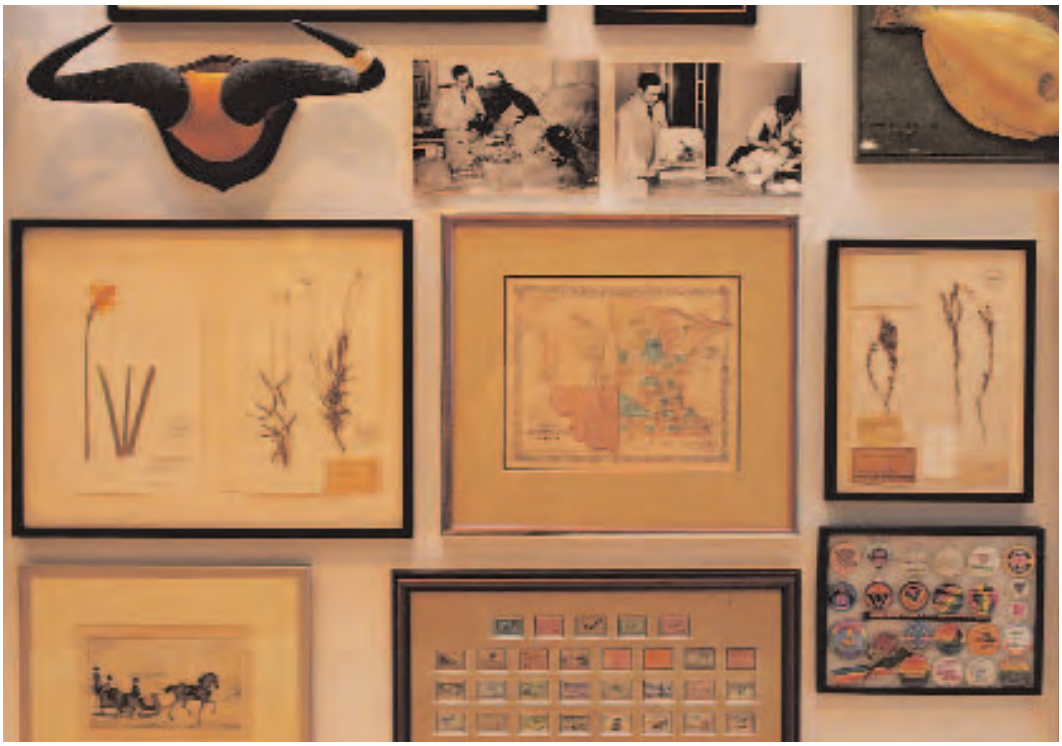
Second shelf, Cabinet of the Allegory of History.

Paul Bunyan, ceramic figurine, Children's Literature Research Collections.

Bowler hat belonging to Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey, The Humphrey Forum.

Pen used by President Lyndon B. Johnson to sign the Food Stamp Act, 1964, The Humphrey Forum.

Norman Borlaug medal, University of Minnesota Archives.



Detail of salon wall. Clockwise from upper left: wildebeest horns, Bell Museum of Natural History; photographs of artists building a diorama, Bell Museum of Natural History; flounder plaque, Bell Museum of Natural History; *Gaura coccinea* collected on Joseph Nicollet's North-Western Expedition, 1839, Herbarium, Bell Museum of Natural History; Gay Pride buttons, Tretter Collection; U.S. Postal Service Duck Stamps series, 1935–95, Bell Museum of Natural History; *The Governor of Red River, Driving His Family on the River in a Horse Cariole*, by Peter Rindisbacher, 1825, lithograph on paper, James Ford Bell Library; *Narcissus pseudo-narcissus* and *Lavandula spica*, Herbarium, Bell Museum of Natural History. Center: *Colton's Minnesota and Dakota* map, 1855, John R. Borchert Map Library.

Howler monkey skeleton, displayed on truss over gallery, Mammal Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History.

The similarities, revealed amusingly in these exhibitions, lie fundamentally at the level of knowledge production and center on the question of mapping and ordering. In the end, organization matters as much as the material; the act of grouping, ordering, systematizing is what produces knowledge. One object is silent; two tell a story; and three tell multiple stories and must be approached with a sense of order, a theory in mind. This need to order leads us back to universities, and the way they order and categorize knowledge through academic disciplines.

Because we work within our discipline, we tend to take academic disciplines for granted, but they resist easy definition. Here again I would like to produce a picture as different from the normal sense of the university as the exhibitions did. We are all familiar with disciplinary histories—those written from within a discipline—but few of us think about the ways in which such disparate disciplines as physics and art history are shaped and grow in similar ways: this is the history of disciplines, a very young field and one different in its interests from that of the usual study of the history of biology, art history, geology, and so on per se. Its aim is one of historical epistemology.

The definition of discipline typically lies within an understanding of disciplines as social activities, viewed either diachronically or synchronically. The size and complexity of disciplines are often considered a question of resource allocation across the university. The life sciences have received huge amounts of money and government funding; as a result, the splits, redefinitions, and multiplications of what constitutes a biology department are mind-boggling. At the other end of the spectrum, classics departments regularly get absorbed into archaeology departments, and philosophy—once the queen of academic disciplines—barely survives as itself. It has not developed and grown into multiple departments. Those disciplines starved of money change slowly; those rich in resources evolve rapidly. Another way of considering these differences diachronically has been characterized by the sociologist Tony Becher as the contrast between urban and rural disciplines: urban disciplines are those in which there are an enormous number of researchers and intense competition over central research questions; rural disciplines have few members and a relaxed attitude toward the wide swaths of intellectual territory that sit unoccupied.[11] In this instance one could characterize human genome studies as the Wall Street of disciplines, while Sumerian studies are in a desert, both literally and figuratively.

What Becher's characterization suggests is the odd fact that disciplines are not contained by universities. A moment's reflection makes this clear. One may be trained in a university, but one's research takes place outside one's home university; and one's primary audience, readers, and professional contacts also lie outside the place where one works. The physical sciences may be an exception, but even here most laboratories are independently funded by the government and are virtually separate fiefdoms. Inside the university, one simply teaches and does a lot of committee work. The relationship of universities to disciplines is that of a factory or repository. Universities, in more ways than one, are museums of knowledge. Indeed, one may make the nice connection between the development of rigidly categorized material collections in the nineteenth century—the birth of modern museums—and the development of separately articulated disciplines. Both acted to produce knowledge by dismembering it first, separating the parts, and firmly patrolling the borders and limits.

Viewed epistemologically and not as social constructions, the nature of disciplines may be rendered formulaically: a discipline is person X and activity Y and object Z, or someone performing an action on something. Paleontologists dig up fossils; art historians look at art; botanists collect plants. A discipline is composed of actors, actions, and objects of study. In a sense, our curriculum is organized about object collections: we teach the objects of our disciplines in the classroom. What I am trying to suggest here is that disciplines function to map knowledge, order it, and categorize it. The strongest and clearest disciplines are those that are most firmly centered on a particular object, one that is shared with no other discipline. As such, the totality of academic disciplines—the very ways in which we construct, distribute, and reproduce scholarly knowledge—must be understood to share fundamental similarities with universal

material collections, those first found in curiosity cabinets. The real similarity between universities and curiosity cabinets, then, lies not only in the material bases of their knowledges but also in their ambitions to map and order the knowable world in order to create a microcosm within their chambers. Just as curiosity cabinets may function as laboratories, the university of academic disciplines may function as a collection of objects.

What I have been doing here is a process of exchange: turning the perception of the curiosity cabinet into something more like a university, the university into something more like a curiosity cabinet. I have tried to reconstruct curiosity cabinets not as collections of static objects but as active, alert centers of intellectual play. Conversely, I have tried briefly to have us think of disciplines not as natural and inevitable tributaries and rivers of knowledge but as somewhat arbitrary, constructed place markers or object containers, that is to say, to make disciplines reflections of the curiosity cabinet. The exercise has a number of points, the first being to recognize that if we are ever going to understand what we do in a university, we need to stand outside our disciplines, to make them unfamiliar. As a historian, I think the best way to do so is through a historical understanding of their origins.

More important, we face today a critical epistemological change, through the advent of the instant delivery of a deluge of digital information. At the height of the museum movement of the nineteenth century it was inconceivable that one could study the world in any other way than through the collecting of material specimens and the deployment of physical instruments. Since then, in discipline after discipline, we have moved from a focus on the object to a concern with process. The arrival of digitization would seem to seal this development, when all information gets encoded in electronic flux. Nonetheless, as we have demonstrated with only a minimal amount of digging, objects persist. The material collections of the university grow larger every day. We estimate, for example, that in the ten campuses of the University of California there are some forty million objects, worth (calculated at replacement costs) some thirty billion U.S. dollars. Something similar is true at every research university.

Faced with this reality, it is worth emphasizing that digitization only digitizes the information relevant to the question asked at the point when data were electronically stored. New questions of objects will always require new digitization efforts. So, for example, twenty years ago scientists began to examine fur and scales in museum specimens for evidence of pesticide residue, in an attempt to study the history of pollution; now one might additionally study heavy metal traces. Or, twenty years ago, much of the taxonomy of the biological world seemed settled, except at the margins. In the past decade, however, ever new DNA techniques performed on specimens have fundamentally revolutionized our understanding of the evolution of the whole order of life. In this basic sense, then, there will always be a need for object collections.

At the level of ordering and mapping, the status of material collections raises other questions. First, the means by which one navigates the Web resembles how one moved through a curiosity cabinet, through association, despite one being virtual and the other material. At the same time, from the point of the consumer, on the Internet the museum and the library are the same thing. Looking at a monitor, learning from words, texts, material, information, images—all collapses into the realm of the visual, comparable to the merger of materials in the cabinet. What remains is the physical object. And presumably the institutions that care for them.

Here, then, is where we end up, in a world in which all former borders are redrawn, all categories erased, in both the museum and the university. How we are to take advantage of the situation, it seems to me, may be answered in part historically, looking back to another period of great revolution, back to the sixteenth century, when the horizons of the knowable world broadened dramatically and, through the widespread development of the printed book, new modes of knowledge exchange were invented. We live in a similar moment. Our backward glance reveals ways of perceiving the world that may be usefully recovered, forms of learning never fully abandoned but rendered marginal and waiting to be restored. Most important, it suggests that the disembodied world of knowledge we suspect we are now entering,

with both trepidation and excitement, a world of nebulous and fluid certainties that slip through our fingers even as we grasp them, can never be severed from its embeddedness in physical experience. Seeing the university as nothing much more than a curiosity cabinet is an oddly humbling perspective, but it also allows us to see this collection, as Quiccheberg says, as a theater of wisdom.

E. (Edward) Bruce Robertson is professor of art history at the University of California–Santa Barbara and consulting curator at the Los Angeles County Museum. He is a distinguished scholar of American art, a respected museum curator, and one of the leading experts on the Renaissance cabinet of wonder. His publications include *Reckoning with Winslow Homer, Marsden Hartley,* and *Representing Old New England: Image and Memory.*

Notes

1. The research and many of the ideas in this essay are the fruits of a collaborative research project, *Microcosms*, led by Mark Meadow, Rosemary Joyce, and myself, and funded by the Getty Grant Program, the Delmas Foundation, the University of California Humanities Research Institute, the Office of Research in the Office of the President, University of California, and by the generous support of the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center and David Marshall, dean, Division of Humanities and Fine Arts, College of Letters and Science, University of California, Santa Barbara. The collaboration with Mark Meadow has been essential to this essay, which incorporates several ideas and even phrases generated by us together in many extended conversations.

2. Michael Thompson, *Rubbish Theory: The Creation and Destruction of Value* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

3. For Olaf Wurm's cabinet, see H. D. Schepelern, "The Museum Wormianum Reconstructed: A Note on the Illustration of 1655," *Journal of the History of Collections* 2.1 (1990): 81–86.

4. For Bacon and Shakespeare, see Peter G. Platt, *Reason Diminished: Shakespeare and the Marvelous* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997). See also Adalgisia Lugli, "Inquiry as Collection," *RES* 12 (Autumn 1986): 109–24. For topical ordering, see Walter Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983). For wonder, see Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998).

5. The basic text for European *kunstkammern* remains Julius von Schlosser, *Die Kunst- und Wunderkammern der Spätrenaissance: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Sammelwesens. Ein Handbuch für Sammler und Leibhaber* (Braunschweig, 1978). See also Joy Kenseth, ed., *The Age of the Marvelous* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). For Aldovrandi, see Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

6. For Kircher, see Findlen's discussion and notes. Kircher now has a prominent place on many web sites.

7. See Krzysztof Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities: Paris and Venice, 1500–1800,* trans. Elizabeth Wiles-Portier (London: Polity Press, 1991).

8. For Albrecht V's collection, see Lorenz Seelig, "The Munich Kunstkammer, 1565–1807," in Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, eds., *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 76–89. For Quiccheberg, see E. M. Hajos, "Samuel Quiccheberg's 'Inscriptiones vel tituli theatri amplissimi,'" *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 25 (1963): 207–11; Dirk Jacob Janssen, "Samuel Quiccheberg's 'Inscriptiones': De encyclopedische versameling als hulpmiddel voor de wetenschap," in Ellinoor Bergvelt, ed., *Verzamelen* (Heerlen, 1993); and Patricia Falguieres, "Fondation du théâtre ou méthode de l'exposition universelle: Les *Inscriptiones* de Samuel Quiccheberg," *Les Cahiers du Musée National d'art moderne* (1992): 40, 91–109. See also Harriet Roth, *Der Anfang der Museumlehre in Deutschland: das Traktat "Inscriptiones vel tituli theatri amplissimi" von Samuel Quiccheberg* (Berlin: Akademie, 2000).

9. For Borges, see Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Press, 1994), xv.

10. Findlen is the best source for this history, although she is not concerned directly with universities. See also Ken Arnold, "Cabinets for the Curious: Practicing Science in Early Modern English Museums," Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1991. For a more general history, see Steven Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). As one example, for fossils, see Martin J. S. Rudwick, *The Meaning of Fossils* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972).

11. Tony Becher and Paul R. Trowler, *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Culture of Disciplines* (Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press and Society for Research into Higher Education, 2001), section 3, 105ff.

Student Curators Reflect on

Cabinet of Curiosities

Student Curators Reflect on *Cabinet of Curiosities*

The Bezoar

JOHN KNUTH

The sign beneath the trichobezoar in the Minnesota Historical Veterinary Museum reads: "From a bovine rumen collected by Ray Burley at Long Prairie Packing Plant So. St. Paul on July 9, 1998. Brought to museum by Melissa Shelton, Class of '99." This is the bezoar that would be displayed in *Mark Dion: Cabinet of Curiosities* at the Weisman Art Museum.

This bezoar is a curiosity. About the size of a soccer ball, it is the largest bezoar in the collection of the Minnesota Historical Veterinary Museum. There it is displayed alongside veterinary tools for castrating cows; empty vials marked opium, morphine, heroin, and strychnine; branding irons; horse bog shoes; and bull rings, hoops that pierce a bull's nose so a person can lead him. Pictures of the faculty of the veterinary school hang in the museum next to newspaper clippings of faculty achievements.

A bezoar is an accumulation of foreign matter in an animal's stomach, in this case a cow's stomach. This is a trichobezoar, which means it is an accumulation of hair. For reasons unknown, sometimes a piece of matter will not be able to pass through an animal. In this cow, and most ruminant animals, matter gets stuck in the rumen, one of its stomachs. Other animals, including humans, have also been known to develop bezoars. According to myth, bezoars contain magical powers, and in earlier times they were thought to be antidotes for poison. Some people thought that they were the origin of stone and, therefore, of soil.

I asked the man who was sitting at a desk at the museum about the bezoar. He spent more than an hour telling me about everything except the bezoar. His name was Jay Sautter and, as a retired faculty member of the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Minnesota, he helped establish the museum. Dr. Sautter told me about the history of the school, which was founded in 1947. Many Minnesota veterans returning from World War II wanted to study veterinary medicine but did not want to leave home again to attend veterinary school. Until then, the University of Minnesota had a diagnostic clinic but not a school to train veterinarians. He told me about how he and his wife had helped start other veterinary schools in Colombia and Nigeria. In the 1970s in Nigeria, he coached a tennis team and designed and built a wood-fueled incinerator for the disposal of the sheep, goats, cows, and horses used for teaching at the school. All of this was more interesting to him than the bezoar.

Like most other curators I met, Dr. Sautter was excited to tell me about every item in his collection, where it came from, and the personalities behind it. He explained that this trichobezoar was unusual because it does not have hair anymore, while the other smaller, less impressive trichobezoars on display still had hair. This bezoar's hair had been worn off. Before Melissa Shelton brought it to the museum, it

belonged to Ray Burley, who had taken it home from his job at a butchering plant in St. Paul to give to his kids. Mr. Burley's kids used the bezoar as a bowling ball in their driveway, and their bowling tournaments had worn off all its hair. What remained was a hard, mineral-like sphere.

Objects and Facts

ALISON GERBER

For me, the Bird Collection at the University of Minnesota was a continually disarming experience. I eventually became accustomed to row after row of identical specimens, only to open a cabinet and find myself faced with a single, human-sized heap of feathers and cracked flesh—an ostrich doubled over and piled directly at eye level. With the intention of inconveniencing the staff as little as possible, I arranged for my first visit to the collection on a Friday, when graduate students and staff would already be in the collection at their weekly bird-skinning get-together. The door to the collection is tucked away behind a corner, and to get the attention of the staff and students, who may or may not be inside, one needs to bang hard.

I was introduced to the collection by a woman who appeared happy for interest in the collection but slightly suspicious of my motives, as was standard in my initial meetings with curators. Like the others, she had a vast store of precise knowledge about her collection and her specific area of study. She was half-willing to explain basic concepts to an obviously intrigued but uninformed party but distracted by a never-ending influx of work. That first day, I learned the basics of bird skinning. Before mounds of sawdust, the smell of thawing blood, and a cabinet full of tiny drying carcasses, I was too overwhelmed to block incoming information no matter how inconsistent with my own personal preferences or values.

For my part in *Cabinet of Curiosities*, I worked in the animal collections primarily because of an interest in object-oriented epistemology but also because of an unfortunate childhood attraction to animals in drawers. A good deal of my youth was spent at the old Science Museum of Minnesota, seated in one of the dimly lit halls in front of heavy wood cabinets, pulling open drawer after drawer of mounted beetles and flies. The prospect of sitting in an academic insect collection with not one but dozens of drawers filled with *the same type of fly* was too much to pass up.

As an artist, I had been thinking a good deal about the meaning of objects and the feasibility of communication through objects, so the chance to study with objects that have historically been sources of knowledge and means for communication seemed personally useful and applicable. I pushed aside my objections to an entire cultural schema that allows for the "collecting" of animals and found a group of curators, collectors, and scholars who were, in their way, doing their part to change the world for the better. Wary of me at first, each of the people I encountered was generous with time and knowledge, trusting to an extent I have not often seen, and supportive of our project.

Looking back, what most interests me about *Cabinet of Curiosities* are the transactions that took place, the contractual agreements, and the level of institutional and personal trust that was in the air. I am probably not fully aware of the value of many of the objects I was permitted not only to have trucked across town but also to place in a critical context in the exhibition cabinets. Each object, for me, now represents a complicated web of transactions—telephone calls and letters from institution to institution, personal calls and e-mails, visits and talks, loan letters and invitations, time and trust.

I had to find objects that suited both the project and my tastes. Collection curators had to agree to allow objects to leave their collections. These objects had to be carefully packed. Transport had to be arranged. The objects had to be accounted for when they entered the museum, and we had to install the objects in the cabinets. After the exhibition, each object had to be accounted for again by the museum, transported home, and checked back into its place. Any damage, missing pieces, or other problems required an extensive new set of transactions.

The human effort and complicated nature of each transaction represent culture in a way similar to the Renaissance *wunderkammern*. In those, objects and specimens from vast geographical reaches were collected and displayed. Those objects represented complex transactions as well as systems of value. Whether a bird is precious to you because you alone have the means to access the fresh fruit necessary to keep it alive, as happened in the Renaissance, or whether it is precious because it no longer is living, as happens today, its presence in the cabinet represents an amazingly complex culture and no small measure of power. An entire world—provenance and culture, power and knowledge, and hope—was situated in each object in our cabinets. The cabinets were structured and intelligible but overwhelming, with a capacity for evoking wonder—proper *wunderkammern*.

Cabinet of Humankind: Creating and Questioning Values

LISA ARNOLD

As one of the curators of the exhibition, I was in charge of the Cabinet of Humankind. It was a daunting responsibility to represent humankind in a four-by-nine-foot space, but that was my challenge. As I began working on this conceptual task, I found myself asking many basic questions about who we, as humans, are—what have we done, how have we lived, and what have we valued? At the same time, it was important to ask what *haven't* we done, how *haven't* we lived, and what *haven't* we valued? I needed to ask who has historically been represented, underrepresented, or erased from ideas of the hegemonic "we." All of these questions and their related issues have influenced what humans have collected and, in turn, what researchers have collected at the University of Minnesota. Because our cabinets could draw only on the universe created by the university's collections, I already was working with a very circumscribed body of objects to represent my enormous subject.

Typically, objects become part of a collection because of the value they are given. Of course, the value of an object or the ideas behind an object may shift over time. The nineteenth-century birthing forceps on one shelf in the Cabinet of Humankind, for example, have little intrinsic value today, but their historical value is of interest to the Owen H. Wangensteen Historical Library of Biology and Medicine. The box for the Battle of the Little Big Horn action figures has little monetary value, but it is pedagogically valuable to the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies to illustrate how genocide is normalized in material objects like toys.

Sometimes objects are actively sought to add value to a collection, but more often objects enter University of Minnesota collections because other collectors have donated them. Many of the curators with whom I worked did not have a budget for the acquisition of objects; instead, they shaped their collections by accepting or rejecting donations. Institutions then become defined by the values of others, rather than by a value system actively constructed by the curator. With such a system, it is easy for oppressive value structures to be perpetuated.

I found myself working within a similar context when constructing the Cabinet of Humankind for the exhibition. Each cabinet had to be defined by what had been considered valuable to others: those who collected and donated items; the curators of the collections; and my cocurators, who made selections from the particular collections they each visited. After looking at what we had selected from the collections, we decided as a group which items could work with the theme of each cabinet. Though I wanted to answer the question *what can I say about humankind through objects?*, the process made me turn this question around and ask, *what can the objects I possess say about humankind?* Thus I was already recognizing the limitations of collections to fully speak to or represent a subject.

I thought it was important that the Cabinet of Humankind function differently from the first cabinets of curiosities. Instead of celebrating the conquests of white European men and exoticizing other

cultures, as the earlier cabinets did, I wanted this cabinet to be more inclusive or at least point to the limitations of this form of representation. But the selections I could make were already determined by values that had shaped the contents of university collections. Therefore, I decided to present the available objects in ways that would question their authority to speak for humankind. In a very dense display I mixed many sculptural busts of famous European men (such as Beethoven) with small abstract figure sculptures from the Weisman Art Museum collection. The anonymous figures placed next to the heads of the mighty suggested those who have gone unnamed and undervalued. I considered turning the busts around so that their backs faced the audience to disrupt the usual display conventions to call attention to patriarchal practices that have excluded women, people of color, and working classes. But that placement disturbed the visual coherence of the cabinets as a whole. In the end, aesthetic choices dominated my judgment. Consequently, it may appear that those men who have been historically celebrated are celebrated again here, while the "others" remain invisible.

In an effort to subvert this reading, I topped the cabinet with a large bronze sculpture by Dorothea Greenbaum titled *Sturdy Girl*, to represent humankind. I included some anticelebratory objects from our history. I named the second shelf in the cabinet the "shelf of oppression." There I displayed an elephant foot that had been made into an ice bucket, shoes used in binding Chinese women's feet, a scrapbook created by a Nazi soldier, a fur hat, a gun, a skull-measuring device, and the box for the Battle of the Little Big Horn action figures, among other things. I hoped these items would call attention to and question some of our past and present value systems.

Mark Dion has referred to the cabinet of curiosity as a "discursive space" where the viewer can make "choices outside the narrative structure within the museum."[1] The beauty of this project was that viewers could create their own narratives for their individual encounter with the exhibition. My goal was that viewers would see the framework of the curiosity cabinet as a threshold to what is outside it—in collections and in society. Viewers need to ask not only what is and is not being represented and valued through representational practices, as seen in *Cabinet of Curiosities*, but also what is and is not represented and valued in our society today. In this way, perhaps we can expand our idea of humankind and cultivate a liberating value system that our everyday choices support.

Note

1. Lisa Graziose Corrin, Miwon Kwon, and Norman Bryson, *Mark Dion* (London: Phaidon Press, 1997), 79.

Curator of the Air

KATE CARMODY

The highlight of the exhibition experience for me was arranging objects in my cabinet. When each student selected an individual cabinet with one of the themes that Mark Dion had established, I chose the Cabinet of the Air. This theme seemed concrete and scientific, especially compared to the allegorical themes such as History and Vision. I was unsure how the allegorical concepts could be realized in objects. Ironically, I discovered that my own ideas about "air" became allegorical and metaphorical as the installation progressed.

Before beginning the installation, we compiled lists of objects from dozens of university collections that could fit thematically into each cabinet. Using my potential list, I created a drawing of how the objects could be arranged. Later, when the cabinets arrived and the objects had been brought to the Weisman, I tried to use that layout for the installation, but I found that my preconceptions were totally wrong. Not having seen all of the objects in person, I quickly discovered that the size of a pelican skeleton in my mind and its real size are extremely different. Installing the Cabinet of the Air challenged many of my preconceptions about objects, space, and ideas.

Interesting things came to light as the objects arrived from their collections. We were told that some objects were too valuable and had to be placed on high shelves for extra security, or they needed protective cases or other special treatment. The meteorite specimens in my cabinet were very needy. Naively, I had originally planned to hang them from the ceiling of the cabinet but I discovered that was impossible: not only were they extremely heavy but they required security cases, special positioning, and white gloves for handling. I found that I liked the challenge of rearranging my ideas along with the objects, altering my plans as I went. Best of all, I could collaborate with the other students and with Mark to build on my initial plan as we installed.

This collaboration allowed me to branch out from my own way of doing things. A challenging moment happened just as we were beginning to install. Mark told me that he envisioned the Cabinet of the Air as having no shelves at all but remaining an open space. I had imagined my cabinet stuffed with objects, with at least five shelves! Because Mark encouraged me to consider fewer shelves and objects than I initially had planned, I used only one shelf and hung many objects with wire within the cabinet. Ultimately, this installation technique added to my theme. I suspended things at different levels and realized that "air" was best described visually with most of the objects actually floating (by wires, of course) or hung on the back panel of the cabinet.

My interpretation of objects for the Cabinet of the Air was straightforward enough, with all of the biological specimens and artifacts related to air in some way. I included a freeze-dried cow's lung from the Veterinary Anatomy Museum—a very unusual-looking thing—because it had breathed air. Some specimens were chosen because they had lived in the air, like insects and birds. I displayed early Native American Mimbres pots and French antique porcelain vases, decorated with images of birds and insects, from the Weisman collections. Other objects were models of things that spend time in the air, such as small airplanes, toy spacecraft, and tiny angel figures. Some things were made from creatures associated with the air, such as vintage feathered fans and hats from the fashion collections at the Goldstein Museum of Design.

We discovered that many of the objects selected from various collections could fit in more than one cabinet, depending on the interpretation we chose to assign to a particular item. For example, an ancient pottery bowl with an image of a bat on it came from the Weisman Art Museum. Applying the same criteria as with the butterflies and birds, I could have put this in the Cabinet of the Air. Instead, we elected to place this in the Cabinet of the Underworld, choosing to emphasize the mythical qualities of bats' associations with darkness. We repeated motifs throughout the cabinets: two large bat specimens from the Mammal Collection could have gone into the Cabinet of the Underworld with the Mimbres pot, but John Knuth claimed them for his Cabinet of the Allegory of Sound and Time. He wanted to emphasize the bats' keen abilities to use sound and echolocation as survival mechanisms.

I especially enjoyed stretching the idea of air with an object in my own cabinet: the skeleton of the three-toed sloth. We decided to place it with other air dwellers— birds, angels, and insects—in the Cabinet of the Air. It could have worked in the Cabinet of the Terrestrial Realm. Or it could have gone into the Cabinet of Humankind as a comment on how humans project their own qualities onto animals (we sometimes use the sloth as a metaphor for laziness). But this particular sloth specimen had been mounted to highlight its ability to hang upside down from a branch, which suggested to me that it was a good candidate for the Cabinet of the Air.

My favorite object also dissolved the boundaries between the cabinets. I included a giraffe skull in the Cabinet of the Air, an item initially planned for the Cabinet of the Terrestrial Realm. I chose it because a giraffe's head spends so much time up in the air. Not only did the skull look intriguing and imposing in size, but viewers took a while to recognize why it was in the Cabinet of the Air. The versatility of these objects encouraged people to think "outside the box" while approaching the cabinets and objects (ironic, because everything was in a huge box) and also helped to create cohesion between the cabinets, linking them with one another.

One pattern of repetition occurred quite by accident, when Mark and his student collaborators chose one large representative object for the top of each cabinet. By happy coincidence, taxidermied birds ended up above most cabinets. A peacock whose tail trailed over the edge of the Cabinet of the Allegory of Vision, with its "eye" on the tail feathers, represented beauty and vision. A penguin, representing the world of the ocean, stood on top of the Cabinet of the Sea. A Canada goose with a tag on its leg stood in front of the Cabinet of the Library or Archive, representing different ways in which humans have archived things, including animals. A snowy owl with outspread wings, representing flight, perched on my Cabinet of the Air.

I had initially envisioned my cabinet installation as a simple display of objects representing a simple concept. I thought that my curatorial selections would be self-evident—everyone would know why a butterfly was included in the Cabinet of the Air. My work became more interesting when I questioned my assumptions and integrated the unexpected. The air—easy to define, yet invisible—became tangible through this extraordinary process of representing elastic concepts through objects.

The Cabinet of the Library or Archive

JEAN-NICKOLAUS TRETTER

From the beginning of the project, I knew that I wanted to install the Cabinet of the Library or Archive. Besides being an inveterate book collector, I believe that books tell a story of themselves as a method of human communication. They were central to the exhibit because they contain the stories of all the other objects in the other cabinets. My major question was how to make books exciting to the casual visitor, who could be expected to spend perhaps two to three minutes reviewing any one cabinet.

I set for myself the goals to tell the story of books; to tell the story of the University of Minnesota collections; and to display history, culture, and art through books. I also had an agenda item of my own: I wanted to show, unapologetically, that Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, and Transgender people were an integral part of all those stories.[1] And I wanted to use allegory. We had discussed using allegory in the exhibit as a means of making objects metaphorical and adding to their meaning. I liked that approach because it lent an atmosphere of the puzzle to the cabinets, inspiring people to think about how to put the pieces of the cabinet together. To realize all of these ideas and goals, I had a cabinet nine feet high and four feet wide with four shelves and a top, plus I decided to use the space in front of the cabinet on a small platform meant to separate the cabinets from museum visitors. All of my stories had to fit in just this space.

It seemed logical that these goals could best be accomplished with a chronological order to the display. By starting with the oldest books on the bottom shelf, visitors could ascend through history as their eyes traveled up the cabinet. When they reached the top, there needed to be something spectacular that would demonstrate the pinnacle of the book lover's view of the world.

On the bottom shelf, I started with the earliest books, displaying books in ancient forms to show the diverse development of the book as an object. I selected treasures from the university's Special Collections and Rare Books: Babylonian clay tablets, Egyptian papyrus, a Sanskrit Ramayana leaf; and, from the Ames Library of South Asia, stunning Burmese palm-leaf manuscripts. Then, as a note of whimsy, I included two glass slides of book lice from the Insect Collection, because the enemies of books also come in many forms and have existed since the dawn of writing.

The next shelf held objects that showed the beginning of the mass production of books. There were music sheets to represent specialized types of reading; the scroll of the Book of Esther in Hebrew; a Chinese woodblock for printing; several illuminated manuscripts; and a leaf of a Gutenberg Bible from the fifteenth century. The Gutenberg leaf was in the middle of the cabinet and symbolized an important

turning point in the history of the book, marking the large-scale mass production of books made possible by the Gutenberg press. The rest of the shelf contained Phillis Wheatley's *Poems on Various Subjects*, published in 1773 and the first publication by an African American; a YMCA document written in the Dakota language; and Hans Hauptmann's *Jesus der Arier,* a Nazi-era publication claiming that Jesus was Aryan. A field notebook kept by Jane Goodall, well known for her research on primates in Africa, asserted the persistence of handwritten manuscripts even in a time of mass production of most books.

The next shelf held the pinnacle of the bookmaker's art. Stellar book illustrations were shown in an open page of *Plantae Selectae,* commissioned by Marie Antoinette to be created for the eighteenth-century French imperial libraries and now in the collection of the university's Andersen Horticultural Library. Other nineteenth-century examples of lavish book illustration were *Les Liliacées, The Family of Toucans,* and *The Red Books of Humphry Repton*. A tribute to public libraries was centered on this shelf in a book checked out of the University of Minnesota Library for the exhibition (rather than being on official "loan," as were the other books). This book was also a tribute to Mark Dion. It was *The Malay Archipelago,* by naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace, one of Dion's favorite books as a young adult and the subject of his installation *The Delirium of Alfred Russel Wallace* (1994). This book held a secret reference: *The Malay Archipelago* was one of my favorite books during my youth, thereby acting as another personal connection with Dion.

The top shelf consisted of two rows of books, the first obscuring the one behind it. These were the most recently published books in the cabinet, from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. In back, I packed a solid row with a wide variety of books for the readers who love pausing over book lists. It held novels, poetry, children's books, technical books, natural history books, biographies, adventure and exploration, advance uncorrected proofs, and everything else that could fit in the width of one shelf. In front of all these, I placed a first edition of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles,* a prime work in the remarkable Sherlock Holmes collection in Special Collections and Rare Books. I set off that book by paperbacks on each side, books that truly brought reading to everyone—not as common best sellers but rather Lesbian and Gay pulp novels. I had a habit of piling allegory upon allegory as I installed the cabinet. This pulp fiction allowed me to make the point that these inexpensive books allowed the experiences of many minority groups to be represented in print and helped me to fulfill one of my goals for my cabinet.

To finish the cabinet, I needed a crown among crowns. On the very top, I decided to place a huge and magnificent antiphonary, a choral book for the Catholic Mass. One of the rarest and most beautiful books in the world, it was created by German monks in 1503. They had painstakingly calligraphed in Latin songs and musical notations and painted jewel-like illuminations to adorn the pages. The book's cover featured original calfskin stretched across wooden boards and decorated with metal corners and studs. We opened the antiphonary to the pages featuring "The Adoration of the Magi." It was astounding indeed, a true wonder.

Finally, I had other objects spill out of the cabinet onto the platform in front. These objects acted as other forms of books, holding information and telling stories in other languages. Two imperial mastodon tusks from the Paleontology Collection were placed at each side to act as bookends to the entire cabinet. I thought the tusks were appropriate, because fossils are like books in that they tell a story of ages past before the advent of reading and writing. A Canada goose told the story of its life from the band on its leg. A large jar of leopard frogs, whose DNA told the story of genetic sequencing and of how our world continues to change, represented a futuristic form of reading.

When I gave tours of the exhibit, I enjoyed hearing people's comments and questions about my cabinet. Children loved it. The spectacular mastodon tusks drew them like magnets and started them asking questions about books and how many things act like books to tell stories. Almost everyone who stopped at these wonders saw something that applied to them. The variety of types and languages found their

audiences, and many people remembered a book from their lives that they felt should have been included in the cabinet. They stopped at the Cabinet of the Library or Archive; they looked; and they went away with a new knowledge of the book. I believe the cabinet accomplished what I set out to do.

Note

1. I capitalize these words, even though they usually appear in lowercase according to the traditional rules of language usage. In the English language, capitalization is often used or perceived as an honorific practice; I insist on capitalizing Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender as part of my commitment to respect and honor these groups of people, who often are persecuted and discriminated against.

Exploring the Universe within the University

CATHERINE A. WILKINS

Ultimately, the most rewarding aspect of this entire project for me was watching museum visitors interact with the finished exhibition. Adults and children, alone and in groups, were drawn to the variety of objects and unconventional display. Many people spent up to an hour studying the skeletons, hats, posters, bats, and other intriguing materials. Their excitement over what they saw generated animated discussions about the objects and their placement in the cabinets. One young girl was so amazed by the two-headed calf skull perched on a high shelf in the Cabinet of the Terrestrial Realm that she lifted up her wide-eyed sister, who wanted to get a better look. They stared at each other in disbelief, then ran off to tell their parents what they had seen.

As a cocurator of *Mark Dion: Cabinet of Curiosities*, I too felt that sense of wonder that the exhibition evoked. From my initial visit to the Andersen Horticultural Library to explore its collections for objects to use in the exhibition, I was exhilarated by the process of discovery that was such an integral part of the experience. For the first time I saw ornate Victorian seed catalogues advertising asters, zinnias, and petunias from local nurserywomen; beautiful, hand-colored engravings of Empress Josephine Bonaparte's lilies executed by the renowned botanical illustrator Pierre-Joseph Redouté; and an eighteenth-century book on New World plants (*Plantae Selectae*, illustrated by Georg Dionysius Ehret) that contained an image of the most gorgeous bananas I have ever seen. Those bananas, reproduced with exquisite detail in bright yellows, pinks, and greens, truly captured the wonder of seeing such an exotic fruit for the first time. They echoed my wonder and excitement at finding such treasures right in the backyard of my own university, just waiting to be discovered for the exhibition.

My exploration of the Andersen Horticultural Library was just one of the many exceptional encounters I had during my work on this exhibition. My research into the University of Minnesota's collections led me to places on campus I had never been to talk with curators about collections of objects I never even knew existed. I dug through boxes of circus trophies, antiwar demonstration armbands, commemorative medallions, and other campus memorabilia at the University of Minnesota Archives. I talked with plant geneticists about the varieties of corn, soybean, oats, and barley developed at the university and planted worldwide. I looked at drawings of midwestern art deco movie theaters at the Northwest Architectural Archives. I marveled over intricately woven Victorian human-hair bracelets and watch fobs in the costume collection of the Goldstein Museum of Design. I even learned how to refract light using prisms from the Physics Department's teaching collection.

In addition to the inherent pleasure of working with such unusual and extraordinary objects, there was the intellectual stimulation of thinking about how these curiosities would be grouped in the nine cabinets. While I initially selected objects for their historical, aesthetic, or scientific significance, I knew that their ultimate meaning in the exhibition would be determined by where they were placed in the cabinets. Did a corncob demonstrating control of gene action by transposable DNA elements from the laboratory

of Nobel Prize winner Barbara McClintock belong in the Cabinet of the Terrestrial Realm or the Allegory of History? Did a pair of Hubert H. Humphrey campaign sunglasses have more to do with the Allegory of History, the Allegory of Vision, or the Cabinet of Humankind?

To help answer these questions, I looked to class readings and discussions on cabinets of curiosities, museum display, and collecting. I had learned over the course of the semester that the selection and positioning of objects in the Renaissance cabinets of curiosity reflected the period's aristocratic, patriarchal, Eurocentric readings of the natural and manmade world. As a class, we wanted to subvert this historical precedent by selecting objects that represented both the oppression and the achievements of women, racial and ethnic minorities, and even the perspectives of animals. Allegory played an important part in thinking about how objects fit into the cabinet themes. For instance, the Victorian mourning objects I chose from the Goldstein Museum were placed in the Cabinet of the Underworld as symbolic representations of death. An effort was made to juxtapose objects from scientific and humanities collections as a way to rethink the institutionalization and compartmentalization of knowledge. Placing living plant specimens next to beaded purses with floral motifs or a one-thousand-year-old Mimbres pot next to a stuffed bat opened up new ways of thinking about objects, collections, and museums that evoked even more awe than seeing any of these interesting items displayed individually.

Both as a process and in its finished form, the installation captured that sense of wonder at seeing new things and new relationships between things that opens the world to unexplored interpretations. *Cabinet of Curiosities* allowed visitors to participate in the exciting process of discovery that I felt in helping to organize the exhibition, making it an unforgettable experience for everyone involved.

Cabinet of Curiosities

Cabinet of Curiosities Exhibition Checklist

Salon Wall

Walrus head, Mammal Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Great Chain of Being poster, Department of Anthropology Teaching Collection

Flounder plaque, Museum Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

X-ray of one-year-old bald eagle with a bowel obstruction, The Raptor Center, College of Veterinary Medicine

American Sparrow Hawk, engraving by John James Audubon, 1827–38, Natural History Art Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Gaura coccinea collected on Joseph Nicollet's North-Western Expedition, 1839, Herbarium and Department of Plant Biology, Bell Museum of Natural History

Gay Pride buttons, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

U.S. Postal Service Duck Stamps series, 1935–95, American Museum of Wildlife Art, Museum Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Map from *Colton's Minnesota and Dakota*, 1855, John R. Borchert Map Library

Photographs of artists building a diorama, Natural History Art Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

"Blue Baby" inoculation poster (in Chinese), Kautz Family YMCA Archives, YMCA of the USA

Caribou antlers, Museum Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Wall hanging depicting Ukrainian woman, Immigration History Research Center

Plaque of the human circulatory system, Department of Anthropology Teaching Collection

The Mexican Comes to the Land of Great Tools and Takes Some of Them Back Home with Him, Diego Rivera (Mexican, 1886–1957), 1931, pen and ink on paper, Social Welfare History Archives

Wildebeest horns, Museum Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Narcissus pseudo-narcissus and *Lavandula spica*, Herbarium and Department of Plant Biology, Bell Museum of Natural History

The Governor of Red River, Driving His Family on the River in a Horse Cariole, by Peter Rindisbacher, 1825, lithograph on paper, James Ford Bell Library

Africa and South America, Portolan map, 1524, James Ford Bell Library

Grain Belt beer can hat, The Humphrey Forum

Green leaf hat with flower trim, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Hat from 1982 Minnesota Gay Games, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Ecru hat with ermine trim, c. 1910, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Plaque for Norman Borlaug, Nobel Prize winner, 1971, University of Minnesota Archives

Black Panther Party poster, 1968, Givens Collection of African American Literature

Zebra head, Mammal Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Chevy banner with Sherlock Holmes motif, Special Collections and Rare Books, University Libraries

VD graphic 28, Social Welfare History Archives

Sherlock Holmes on black velvet, pigment on velvet, Special Collections and Rare Books, University Libraries

Sex education posters, Youth and Life series, American Social Hygiene Association, Social Welfare History Archives

Original artwork from *The Runaway Bunny*, by Margaret Wise Brown, illustrated by Clement Hurd, Children's Literature Research Collections

Archaeopteryx, cast paper, Rocks and Minerals Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

Steamboat excursion poster, 1902, Immigration History Research Center

Wolffia columbiana (world's smallest flowering plant), Herbarium and Department of Plant Biology, Bell Museum of Natural History

Lincoln's Gettysburg Address (world's smallest book), Special Collections and Rare Books, University Libraries

Drawing of NorShor movie theater, Duluth, Minnesota, by Jack Liebenberg, 1940–41, Northwest Architectural Archives

Ichthyosaurus, plaster cast, Rocks and Minerals Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

Plan for the grounds of the University of Minnesota, drawing by H. W. S. Cleveland, 1892, University of Minnesota Archives

University of Minnesota pennant, University of Minnesota Archives

North and South America, map by Johann Baptist Homan, 1707, James Ford Bell Library

Raven, by Thomas Bewick, woodblock and print, Natural History Art Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Key to the city of Delano, Minnesota, The Humphrey Forum

Jane Goodall's field notes and photographs, drawings by David Bygott, Jane Goodall Institute's Center for Primate Studies

Alligator, Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

Child's painting of the Washington Monument given to Hubert H. Humphrey, The Humphrey Forum

Boar head, Mammal Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Italian banner, Immigration History Research Center

Prairie school–style stained glass window, designed by William Gray Purcell and George Elmslie, c. 1913, Northwest Architectural Archives

Drawings of poet John Berryman by Louis Safer, charcoal and graphite on paper, Special Collections and Rare Books, University Libraries

Set design, *The Demons of Hell*, early twentieth century, The Twin City Scenic Collection, Performing Arts Archives

American Dreamers, drawing by Star Wallowing Bull (Big Bear), 2000, prisma color and graphite on paper, Weisman Art Museum

Printed swatch, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, silk and Fortisan, 1955, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Chinese Sea Horse, oil painting by Marsden Hartley, 1941, Weisman Art Museum

Howler monkey skeleton, displayed on truss over gallery, Mammal Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Cabinet of the Underworld

Note: All items are listed as they are arranged, from left to right, in the cabinets.

FRONT OF CABINET

Bison skull, Invertebrates and Paleontology Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

SIDE OF CABINET

Ceremonial shovel, 1971, The Humphrey Forum

Soil sample from Benton County, Minnesota, College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences

TOP OF CABINET

Model of dinosaur *Tyrannosaurus rex*, fiberglass, Rocks and Minerals Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

TOP SHELF

Chinese burial vase, 2500–1500 BC, ceramic, Neolithic Yanshao painted pottery culture, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Greek vase (underworld theme), Weisman Art Museum

Bat, Mammal Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

The Sodomite's Descent into Hell, photograph of a thirteenth-century Norwegian woodblock print, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Studies

Mimbres pottery polychrome bowl (bat design), 1000–1150, Weisman Art Museum

Bat (attached to Mimbres pottery stand), Mammal Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Mourning hat with veil, 1880–89, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Victorian mourning jewelry, The Goldstein Museum of Design

- Brooch of onyx, gold, and pearl, in lily of the valley design, 1880–89
- Jet necklace with gold seed pearl locket, swag, and star design, with photograph of young man and his daughter, 1880–89
- Braided-hair watch fob
- Braided-hair watch fob
- Braided-hair watch fob with barrel-shaped ornament attached

Raven, Bird Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

SECOND SHELF

Buffalo fish gill cover, Invertebrates and Paleontology Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Turkey vulture, Bird Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Plains viscacha (burrowing mammal), Mammal Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Model of exploded human skull, Department of Anthropology Teaching Collection

Zincite specimen, Rocks and Minerals Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

American elephant tooth, Invertebrates and Paleontology Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Saber-toothed cat skull, Department of Anthropology Teaching Collection

Elephas jeffersoni (scapula section), Invertebrates and Paleontology Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Bison bone, Invertebrates and Paleontology Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

American elephant vertebra, Invertebrates and Paleontology Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

THIRD SHELF

Paxillus vernalis, swirl dips (an agaric), line drawing by Vera Ming Wong, Herbarium and Department of Plant Biology, Bell Museum of Natural History

Scarab beetles, five specimens, Insect Collection, Department of Entomology

Case containing fungi specimens, Herbarium and Department of Plant Biology, Bell Museum of Natural History:

Top Shelf

Paxillus vernalis, swirl dips (an agaric)

Geastrum fornicatum, puffball (an earthstar)

Lysurus cruciatus, stinkhorn (extremely rare)

Middle Shelf

Lactarius scrobiculatus, milk mushroom (an agaric)

Morchella esculenta, morel

Strobilomyces floccopus, spiky cap (a bolete)

Bottom Shelf

Ganoderma tsugae, tree fungus

Russula sp., milk mushroom (an agaric)

Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman, by Sarah H. Bradford and W. J. Moses, New York, 1869, Givens Collection of African American Literature

Lysurus cruciatus, stinkhorn, line drawing by Vera Ming Wong, Herbarium and Department of Plant Biology, Bell Museum of Natural History

Beryl specimen, Rocks and Minerals Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

BOTTOM SHELF (BACK ROW)

Barite specimen, crystal system, orthorhombic, Rocks and Minerals Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

Azurite and malachite specimen (placed on barite specimen), Rocks and Minerals Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

Pyrite specimen (fool's gold), Rocks and Minerals Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

Speleothem fossil, Rocks and Minerals Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

Elephas tusk fossil, Rocks and Minerals Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

Trilophodon fossil, Rocks and Minerals Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

BOTTOM SHELF (MIDDLE ROW)

Maclurites: Ordovician gastropod fossil (extends from back to front), snail, found by University of Minnesota students, Rocks and Minerals Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

Rose quartz specimen, Rocks and Minerals Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

Maclurites: Ordovician gastropod fossil, snail, found by University of Minnesota students, Rocks and Minerals Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

Endoceramus: Ordovician cephalopod fossil, related to modern octopus and squid, found by University of Minnesota students under the Washington Avenue Bridge, Rocks and Minerals Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

Mastodon tooth fossil, Rocks and Minerals Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

BOTTOM SHELF (FRONT ROW)

Monazite sand, Rocks and Minerals Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

Staurolite crystal, Rocks and Minerals Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

Shark's tooth fossil, Rocks and Minerals Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

Ordovician trilobite fossil, found by University of Minnesota students, Rocks and Minerals Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

Native copper specimen, Rocks and Minerals Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

Shark's tooth fossil, Rocks and Minerals Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

Shark's tooth fossil, Rocks and Minerals Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

Cabinet of the Sea

TOP OF CABINET

Emperor penguin, Bird Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

TOP SHELF

Mother-of-pearl calling card cases, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Model bird diorama, Natural History Art Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Fish-shaped teapot, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Shell coin purse, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Model of a Spanish galleon, James Ford Bell Library

Porcelain river god, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Fire Island lighthouse lamp, by Willie Job, stained glass, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Pipe-cleaner frog with sword, Children's Literature Research Collections

MIDDLE SHELF

Articulated frog skeleton mounted vertically in glass box, Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

Large turtle shell, Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

Large marine starfish, Invertebrates and Paleontology Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Narwhal tusk, Mammal Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Mounted catfish skull, Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

BOTTOM SHELF (BACK ROW)

Zebra mussel cluster of Minnesota mussels, Invertebrates and Paleontology Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Large trumpet shell *(Fasiolarhiae megala tractus capuanus),* Invertebrates and Paleontology Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Large marine clamshell, Invertebrates and Paleontology Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Section of coral, Invertebrates and Paleontology Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Marine whelk (black and brown), Invertebrates and Paleontology Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Pink marine clam with spikes, Invertebrates and Paleontology Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Grey conch shell *(Cassidae),* Invertebrates and Paleontology Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Giant clamshell, Invertebrates and Paleontology Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Algae specimen, Herbarium and Department of Plant Biology, Bell Museum of Natural History

Perch anatomy diagram, Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

Three Chinese fish, in rectangular jar (labeled "fish hosts of *Clonorchis sinensis* from Canton, China"), Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

Partially dissected ray, Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

Morea eel, Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

Walrus bacculum, Mammal Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Seaweed specimen, Herbarium and Department of Plant Biology, Bell Museum of Natural History

Algae specimen, Herbarium and Department of Plant Biology, Bell Museum of Natural History

Walrus tusk, Mammal Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Shark with preserved cartilage stained red, Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

BOTTOM SHELF (FRONT ROW)

Mucket specimen *(Actinonaias ligamentia),* in glass vial, Invertebrates and Paleontology Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Giant floater specimen *(Pysanodon grandis),* in glass vial, Invertebrates and Paleontology Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Buckhorn clamshell *(Tritogonia verracosa),* Invertebrates and Paleontology Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Clamshells *(Potamilus alatus),* Invertebrates and Paleontology Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Algae specimen, Herbarium and Department of Plant Biology, Bell Museum of Natural History

Butterfly clamshell *(Ellipsaria lineolata),* Invertebrates and Paleontology Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Paddlefish, three medium specimens, Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

Toadfish *(Ogocephalus cubifrons),* Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

Algae specimen, Herbarium and Department of Plant Biology, Bell Museum of Natural History

Flying fish *(Exocoetus callopterus),* Fish, Reptile, and Amphibian Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Algae specimen, Herbarium and Department of Plant Biology, Bell Museum of Natural History

Albatross fish *(Porichthys porosissimus),* Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

Freshwater drum fish *(Aplodinotus oruanieus),* Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

Fish *(Achrius fasciatus),* in square jar, Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

Cabinet of the Air

TOP OF CABINET

Snowy owl, Bird Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

TOP SHELF

Barometer, Department of Physics Teaching Collection

Blue ceramic jar with bird motif, China, eighteenth century, Weisman Art Museum

Eagle's nest with chick, Bird Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Ceramic cachepot with bird on lid, France, mid-eighteenth century, Weisman Art Museum

Three porcelain cherub figurines, Germany, 1860, Weisman Art Museum

Meteorite, fell in Fisher, Minnesota, on April 9, 1894, olivine-hypersthene, Meteorite Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

Anoka II meteorite, found in Champlin, Minnesota, in 1983, iron, group IIIC, fine octahedrite, Meteorite Collection, Department of Geology and Geophysics

Articulated spoon-billed pelican skeleton, Bird Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

MIDDLE OF CABINET (BACK)

Ostrich feather fan, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Paper fan, with butterfly motif, Japan, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Bird-shaped green feather fan, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Lucky 'Leven, B-29 bomber plane, model I, Air Force ROTC, Detachment 415

Corydalus Cornutus, Insect Collection, Department of Entomology

Corydalus Cornutus, Insect Collection, Department of Entomology

Large hand-painted paper fan with bird motif, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Butterfly specimens, Insect Collection, Department of Entomology

Dakota hot air balloon postcard, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

MIDDLE OF CABINET (FRONT)

Freeze-dried cow lung, Veterinary Anatomy Museum, College of Veterinary Medicine

Feather hat, c. 1960, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Articulated sloth skeleton, mounted on branch, Mammal Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Grasshopper, mounted in box, Insect Collection, Department of Entomology

Pink feather fan, The Goldstein Museum of Design

BOTTOM SHELF

Barbarella movie video, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

African lungfish, Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

Giraffe skull and jaw, Department of Anthropology Teaching Collection

Egyptian Horus figurine (falcon figure), wood covered with gesso and polychrome, 850 BC, Weisman Art Museum

Mimbres pottery with insect images, date unknown, Weisman Art Museum

Flying lizards from Malay Peninsula, Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

Mounted barn owl, Bird Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Model NASA jet, The Humphrey Forum

Frolicking Monkeys, Irish, cast bronze, marble base, Weisman Art Museum

Cabinet of the Terrestrial Realm

TOP OF CABINET

Elephant cranium, *Elaphus*, Mammal Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

TOP SHELF

Hamadryas baboon, *Papio hamadryas*, skeleton mount, Mammal Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Hogshead Studio props, vinyl plastisol pigs by Alan Kraning, twentieth century, Weisman Art Museum

SECOND SHELF

Skull of a two-headed calf, Veterinary Anatomy Museum, College of Veterinary Medicine

Bog shoes for horse, Minnesota Historical Veterinary Museum

Plastinated calf head with cleft palate, Veterinary Anatomy Museum, College of Veterinary Medicine

Spring Day, painting by Chet Harmon LaMore, 1942, Weisman Art Museum

Cyclops horse head, Veterinary Anatomy Museum, College of Veterinary Medicine

Oral horse speculum, Minnesota Historical Veterinary Museum

Branding iron, Minnesota Historical Veterinary Museum

Bezoar, cow hair ball, Minnesota Historical Veterinary Museum

THIRD SHELF

Two-toed ungulate, deer, Artiodactyl, articulated foot, Mammal Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

American black bear, *Ursus americanus*, articulated foot, Mammal Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Slow loris, *Nycticebus coucang*, skeleton mount, Mammal Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Hairy armadillo, *Chaetophructus villosus*, skeleton mount, Mammal Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Lynx, *Lynx canadensis*, full body mount, Mammal Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Flagellum lineatus, Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

Pituophis melanoleucus, Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

Millipede, Insect Collection, Department of Entomology

Salamander, *Eublepharis macularius*, stained and cleared, Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

Uromastix hardwicki, Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

Toad, *Bufo horribilis*, Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

BOTTOM SHELF (FRONT ROW)

Mamilaria camptotricha, Andersen Horticultural Library

Anona muricata, Herbarium and Department of Plant Biology, Bell Museum of Natural History

Luffa cylindrical, Herbarium and Department of Plant Biology, Bell Museum of Natural History

Seed cone, *Dioon edule*, Herbarium and Department of Plant Biology, Bell Museum of Natural History

Wooden compact with art nouveau clovers, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Beaded purses with floral motifs, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Crescentia cujete, Herbarium and Department of Plant Biology, Bell Museum of Natural History

Flower seed catalogues, Jessie R. Prior (1904), Miss C. H. Lippincott (1898), and Miss Emma White (1903), Andersen Horticultural Library

Brownie doll, Children's Literature Research Collections

Dioon spinulosum, Herbarium and Department of Plant Biology, Bell Museum of Natural History

Pinecone, *Dioon edule*, Herbarium and Department of Plant Biology, Bell Museum of Natural History

Historic garden tools, Andersen Horticultural Library

Seeds, *Moquilea platypus*, Herbarium and Department of Plant Biology, Bell Museum of Natural History

Theobroma cacao, Herbarium and Department of Plant Biology, Bell Museum of Natural History

Agave filifera, Andersen Horticultural Library

BOTTOM SHELF (BACK ROW)

Proscopa geniculata, Insect Collection, Department of Entomology

Tenodera fasciata, Insect Collection, Department of Entomology

Wood sample, Herbarium and Department of Plant Biology, Bell Museum of Natural History

Soybean varieties, selected for variations of color, size, and texture, College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences

Barley, Lacey 2000, College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences

Oat varieties, Gopher 1923, Andrew 1949, Minnhafer 1957, Lyon 1977, Moore 1978, Starter 1986, Milton 1994, Richard 2000, Sesqui 2001, College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences

Plant press, Herbarium and Department of Plant Biology, Bell Museum of Natural History

Cabinet of Humankind

TOP OF CABINET

Sturdy Girl, sculpture by Dorothea S. Greenbaum, 1975, bronze, Weisman Art Museum

TOP SHELF

Homemade Middle Eastern dolls, Children's Literature Research Collections

African statuettes, carved ivory, date unknown, Weisman Art Museum

Peruvian ceramic figures, Weisman Art Museum

Two kissing Dutch boys, figurine, Delft china, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Chinese statuettes, Early Ching Dynasty, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, wood, carved and polychromed, Weisman Art Museum

Chinese statuettes, Ching Dynasty, porcelain, Weisman Art Museum

Greenlander figures, Danish ceramic, The Goldstein Museum of Design

SECOND SHELF— SHELF OF OPPRESSION (BACK ROW)

Elephant foot, made into an ice bucket, Museum Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Bayonet, Army ROTC

Sword, Immigration History Research Center

Battle of the Little Big Horn action figures, Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies

A Study of the Marquis de Sade, by Eugene Duehren (pseudonym for Iwan Bloch), a book that was saved from fire when Nazis burned a Berlin library in May 1933, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

SECOND SHELF— SHELF OF OPPRESSION (FRONT ROW)

Red lotus shoes, silk, China, c. 1900, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Black Chinese binding shoes, silk, Owen H. Wangensteen Historical Library of Biology and Medicine

World War I helmet, Army ROTC

Revolver, Minnesota Historical Veterinary Museum

Toque hat of mink and leopard furs, c. 1970, Canada, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Temporary Travel Document No. 0014 for German Jew, issued January 30, 1951, to stateless Georg Glatz, born October 7, 1878, Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies

Nazi photo album and scrapbook, by G. Reutlinger, R.A.D., Baden, Germany, dated April 1, 1939, Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies

Skull-measuring device, Department of Anthropology Teaching Collection

THIRD SHELF (HANGING)

Teething ring, early 1900s, silver and mother-of-pearl, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Baby rattle, The Goldstein Museum of Design

THIRD SHELF (BACK WALL)

Birthing forceps, late 1800s, stainless steel, Owen H. Wangensteen Historical Library of Biology and Medicine

Black strapless bra, c. 1950, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Cotton hand-knit baby booties, 1901, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Red kid leather gloves, c. 1950, The Goldstein Museum of Design

THIRD SHELF (ON SHELF)

Glass baby bottles with metal nipples, nineteenth century, Owen H. Wangensteen Historical Library of Biology and Medicine

Infant feeders, ceramic, Owen H. Wangensteen Historical Library of Biology and Medicine

Mellin's baby food, wheat flour, malted barley, wheat bran, and potassium bicarbonate, c. 1920s, Owen H. Wangensteen Historical Library of Biology and Medicine

Spoon, ladle, spoon, and fork serving set, Germany, Rosenthal, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Napoleonic teapot, France, manufactured by Sevres, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Stone tools, Department of Anthropology Teaching Collection

Apothecary jar, Owen H. Wangensteen Historical Library of Biology and Medicine

Black top hat, worn by Hubert H. Humphrey as vice president, from Juster's, Minneapolis, The Humphrey Forum

White cotton bib with lace and embroidery, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Silver cigarette case and lighter, c. 1940–60, The Goldstein Museum of Design

High-top button shoes, no date, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Corset, c. 1900, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Rhinestone tiara, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Hat pin, The Goldstein Museum of Design

White satin wedding shoes, 1922, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Green knit garter-stitch beaded purse, c. 1900–1910, The Goldstein Museum of Design

BOTTOM SHELF (BACK ROW)

Bust of Geoffrey St. Hillaire, Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

Bust of Georges Cuvier, Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

The Warrior #1, by Harold Kerr, cast iron, 1977, Weisman Art Museum

Bust of Goethe, Department of German, Scandinavian, and Dutch Library

BOTTOM SHELF (FRONT ROW)

Bust of Hubert H. Humphrey, The Humphrey Forum

Head, by Jacques Lipchitz, 1914, bronze, Weisman Art Museum

Bust of Abraham Lincoln, The Humphrey Forum

Bust of George Washington, The Humphrey Forum

Kendo Man IV, by Donald Schule, 1966, bronze, Weisman Art Museum

Bust of Benjamin Franklin, Weisman Art Museum

Bust of Napoleon Bonaparte, Weisman Art Museum

Bust of Winston Churchill, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Stoneware bust, ceramic, Rookwood, 1912, copy of a bust in marble by Desiderio da Settignano in the National Gallery, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Cabinet of the Library or Archive

TOP OF CABINET

Antiphonary, in Latin, original calfskin over wooden boards with fraise plaques and bosses on sides and center. Venetÿs, L. A. Giunta, 1503, Special Collections and Rare Books, University Libraries

TOP SHELF (BACK)

Hough's American Woods, Part I, by Romeyn B. Hough, B. A. Lowville, New York, 1893, Andersen Horticultural Library

Rural Essays, by Andrew Jackson Downing, New York, 1856, Andersen Horticultural Library

N. V. Gogol, five volumes (in Russian), by the Academic Union of the USSR, Moscow, 1956, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Through Russian Snows, by G. A. Henty, Blackie & Son Limited, London, date unknown, Children's Literature Research Collections

Out on the Pampas, by G. A. Henty, A. L. Burt Publisher, New York, date unknown, Children's Literature Research Collections

St. Bartholomew's Eve, by G. A. Henty, Blackie & Son Limited, London, 1874, Children's Literature Research Collections

St. George for England, by G. A. Henty, A. L. Burt Publisher, New York, date unknown, Children's Literature Research Collections

By Conduct and Courage, by G. A. Henty, Blackie & Son Limited, London, date unknown, Children's Literature Research Collections

The Dragon and the Raven, by G. A. Henty, William L. Allison Co., New York, 1900, Children's Literature Research Collections

Both Sides the Border, by G. A. Henty, Blackie & Son Limited, London, 1899, Children's Literature Research Collections

For Name and Fame, by G. A. Henty, George M. Hill Co., Chicago, date unknown, Children's Literature Research Collections

Through the Fray, by G. A. Henty, A. L. Burt Publisher, New York, 1852, Children's Literature Research Collections

The Cat of Bubastes, by G. A. Henty, Blackie & Son Limited, London, date unknown, Children's Literature Research Collections

Sherlock Holmes and the Red Demon, advance uncorrected proofs, by John H. Watson, M.D., introduced and annotated by Larry Millett, Viking, 1996, Special Collections and Rare Books, University Libraries

The Life and Letters of John Burroughs, in two volumes, by Clara Barrus, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1925, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Winckelmann, by Wolfgang Leppmann, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1970, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Giant Brains, by Edmund Callis Berkeley, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1949, Charles Babbage Institute, Center for the History of Information Technology

John Burroughs Talks, as reported by Clifton Johnson, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1922, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood, by bell hooks, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1996, Givens Collection of African American Literature

Last and First, by John Addington Symonds, Nicholas L. Brown Publishers, New York, 1909, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Frederick the Great, by Louisa Mühlbach, A. L. Burt Publisher, New York, 1887, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Ways of Nature, by John Burroughs, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1905, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Love's Coming-of-Age, by Edward Carpenter, Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1916, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

The House of the Seven Gables, by Nathaniel Hawthorne, copy 30 of 579, Henry Altemus, Philadelphia, 1899, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

TOP SHELF (FRONT)

Spring Fire, by Vin Packer, Gold Medal Books, New York, 1952, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

The Battlefield, by Kurt McCord, Adam's Gay Readers, 1990, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Mask of Lesbos, by Lee Thomas, Beacon Signal, 1963, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

The Hound of the Baskervilles (open), by A. Conan Doyle, George Newmes, Ltd., 1902, Special Collections and Rare Books, University Libraries

Pick the Right Road, by Peter A. Neus, HIS Publications, 1991, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Sappho of Lesbos, by Jefferson Cooper, Paperback Library, New York, 1966, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Fast Track, by Anonymous, Gaytimes Book Club, New York, 1980, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

SECOND SHELF

Plantae Selectae (open), by Christoph Jakob Trew, with illustrations by Georg Dionysius Ehret, J. J. Haide, Augsburg, 1750–73, Andersen Horticultural Library

Les Liliacées, volume 2, by Pierre-Joseph Redouté, 1802–16, Andersen Horticultural Library

Family of Toucans, by John Gould, published by the author, London, 1834, Andersen Horticultural Library

Travel Book (open), by James Forbes, White Cochrane & Co., London, 1813, Ames Library of South Asia

Rural Essays, by A. J. Downing, Leavitt & Allen, New York, 1856, Andersen Horticultural Library

Malay Archipelago (open), by Alfred Russel Wallace, Harper & Brothers Publishers, New York, 1869, Wilson Library, University Libraries

The Red Books of Humphry Repton, by Humphry Repton, Basilisk, London, 1976, Andersen Horticultural Library

Mounted short-eared barn owl, Bird Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

THIRD SHELF (BACK)

Children's Album for Piano (in Russian), by Peter Illich Tchaikovsky, Composer Publishing House, St. Petersburg, 1992, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Selected Works for Piano, volume II (in Russian), by Peter Illich Tchaikovsky, Composer Publishing House, St. Petersburg, 1994, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

The Seasons (in Russian), by Peter Illich Tchaikovsky, Composer Publishing House, St. Petersburg, 1994, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

12 Pieces for Piano (in Russian), by Peter Illich Tchaikovsky, Composer Publishing House, St. Petersburg, 1996, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Scroll of Esther, in Hebrew on vellum (to the right, the scroll lists as killed the ten sons of Hamanson of Hammedatha, the foe of the Jews; on the left the scroll describes the origins of the Jewish holiday of Purim), eighteenth century, Special Collections and Rare Books, University Libraries

Chinese wood printing block, possibly Chin Dynasty, c. 200 BCE, Special Collections and Rare Books, University Libraries

Leaf from Gutenberg Bible (open), in Latin, Main, Germany, 1450–55, Special Collections and Rare Books, University Libraries

Jane Goodall's twine-bound field notebook, date unknown, Jane Goodall Institute's Center for Primate Studies

Meeting minutes from the first organizational meeting of the first Native American YMCA (in the Dakota language), 1879, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, YMCA of the USA

Poems on Various Subjects, by Phillis Wheatley, A. Bell, Bookseller, London, 1773, Givens Collection of African American Literature

Jesus der Arier (Jesus the Aryan), by Hans Hauptmann, Deutscher Volksverlag, Munich, Dr. E. Boepple, 1930, Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies

The Belles Heures of Jean Duke of Berry, George Braziller, New York, 1974, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

The Très Riches Heures of Jean Duke of Berry, George Braziller, New York, 1969, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

The Grand Heures of Jean Duke of Berry, George Braziller, New York, 1973, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

The History of Alexander the Great, reprint of an illuminated manuscript of Vasco da Lucena's French translation of the ancient text *Historiae Alexandri Magni*, by Quintus Curtius Rufus, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 1996, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

BOTTOM SHELF (BACK)

Egyptian papyrus fragment, in hieroglyphics and ancient Greek, Ptolemaic period, c. 300 BCE, Special Collections and Rare Books, University Libraries

Ramayana (one of the two great epic poems of ancient India), Sanskrit leaf on early paper, India, date unknown, Special Collections and Rare Books, University Libraries

BOTTOM SHELF (FRONT)

Queen's Remembrancer Roll, on parchment, dedicated to Elizabeth Regina, queen of England and Ireland, by Edward Pytt, remembrancer to the queen and master of the court of the exchequer, 1581, Special Collections and Rare Books, University Libraries

Ethiopian manuscript (in Coptic), on goat skin, religious text, c. thirteenth century, Special Collections and Rare Books, University Libraries

Babylonian clay cone, grain report written in cuneiform, c. 1800–1600 BCE, Special Collections and Rare Books, University Libraries

Babylonian clay tablet, grain report written in cuneiform, c. 1800–1600 BCE, Special Collections and Rare Books, University Libraries

Book lice, on glass slides, *Psacoptera liposcelidae, Liposcelis divinatorius*, 1948 and 1973, Insect Collection, Department of Entomology

Batta or Batak manuscript, on tree bark (contains the text of divination called Ari Rodjang), Sumatra, pre-1750, Special Collections and Rare Books, University Libraries

Burmese palm-leaf manuscript, nineteenth century, Ames Library of South Asia

Burmese palm-leaf manuscript, nineteenth century, Ames Library of South Asia

FRONT OF CABINET

Imperial mastodon tusks as bookends, *Elephas imperator*, found in Pipestone County, Minnesota, Invertebrates and Paleontology Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Canada goose, Bird Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Large jar of leopard frogs, *Rana pipiens*, for frog research (scientists "read" frogs like a book to find out about genetic sequencing and DNA), Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

Cabinet of the Allegory of Vision

TOP OF CABINET

Peacock, Bird Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

TOP SHELF

Peacock vase, Jean G. Chamberlain, 1910–19, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Cosmetic case, Belgium, 1948, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Art nouveau compact, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Sterling silver compact with four square-cut rubies, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Beaded powder compact with four flowers, 1900–1940, The Goldstein Museum of Design

White enamel compact with small beaded and rhinestone design, 1910–50, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Red-grained leather compact, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Black and white enamel compact with floral design, 1900–1950, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Yellow marbleized plastic and glitter compact, 1920–29, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Woodstock Observation Post, oil painting by Anton Refregier, 1944, Weisman Art Museum

Ivory owl, Japan, nineteenth century, Weisman Art Museum

Mirror, Germany, c. 1750, Weisman Art Museum

Minnehaha Falls, oil painting by Albert Bierstadt, 1886, Weisman Art Museum

Candlesticks, France, nineteenth century, Weisman Art Museum

Candlesticks, France, nineteenth century, Weisman Art Museum

Korean masks, date unknown, Weisman Art Museum

MIDDLE SHELF (MOUNTED TO CABINET)

Eyeglasses, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Eyeglasses, early twentieth century, Owen H. Wangensteen Historical Library of Biology and Medicine

Eyeglasses, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Eyeglasses, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Eyeglasses, early twentieth century, Owen H. Wangensteen Historical Library of Biology and Medicine

Eyeglasses, early twentieth century, Owen H. Wangensteen Historical Library of Biology and Medicine

Eyeglasses, early twentieth century, Owen H. Wangensteen Historical Library of Biology and Medicine

Eyeglasses, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Eyeglasses, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Eyeglasses, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Eyeglasses, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Eyeglasses, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Eyeglasses, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Eyeglasses, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Eyeglasses, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Eyeglasses, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Sunglasses, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Eyeglasses, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Eyeglasses, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Sunglasses, 1900–1919, The Goldstein Museum of Design

MIDDLE SHELF (ON SHELF)

Hubert H. Humphrey campaign glasses, 1968, The Humphrey Forum

Sunglasses, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Model of the human eye, Department of Physics Teaching Collection

Opera glasses with mother-of-pearl inlay, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Hubert H. Humphrey campaign glasses, 1968, The Humphrey Forum

Orange canvas goggles, 1900–1919, The Goldstein Museum of Design

BOTTOM SHELF

Animal Locomotion Plate #61, photograph by Eadweard Muybridge, 1887, Joseph S. Mertle Collection on the History of Photomechanics

Graflex camera, Department of Physics Teaching Collection

Lumière diascope of First National Bank, Rhinelander, Wisconsin, Northwest Architectural Archives

Prisms, Department of Physics Teaching Collection

Stereograph viewer, Northwest Architectural Archives

Large lens, Department of Physics Teaching Collection

Stereographs, Northwest Architectural Archives

Merce Cunningham, gelatin silver print by Duane Michals, Weisman Art Museum

Merce Cunningham, gelatin silver print by Duane Michals, Weisman Art Museum

Microscope with box and accessories, early twentieth century, Owen H. Wangensteen Historical Library of Biology and Medicine

Cabinet of the Allegory of Sound and Time

TOP OF CABINET

Clock with muse and lyre, France, nineteenth century, Weisman Art Museum

TOP SHELF

Australian fruit bat, Museum Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Formal clock, France, Weisman Art Museum

Hammering man and bear, wood carving, Children's Literature Research Collections

Didgeridoo, Australia, Music Library

Elvis guitar wall clock, from Karal Ann Marling, Department of Art History (faculty and staff office collections)

Tree of songbirds, Bird Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Porcelain man and woman playing instruments, France, 1900, Weisman Art Museum

Baritone used by Hubert H. Humphrey as a student, The Humphrey Forum

Metronome, Department of Physics Teaching Collection

MIDDLE SHELF

Othello record, starring Paul Robeson, Givens Collection of African American Literature

Lesbian Concentrate record, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Langston Hughes Poetry record, read by Langston Hughes, Givens Collection of African American Literature

Wizard of Oz record, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Interviews with Women, Shamans, Activists, Teachers, Artists, and Healers, reel-to-reel tape, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Billy Budd record, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Billy Budd video, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Billy Budd compact disc, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Hit of the Week stack of records, Music Library

Lady of the Evening Fox Trot, Edison record, Music Library

Cicadidae Fidicina cahla, Cicadidae Fidicina fumea, Cicadidae Pomponia imperatoria, Cicadidae Pompponia rajah, Insect Collection, Department of Entomology

Three band letters from University of Minnesota–Waseca campus, University of Minnesota Archives

Shubert Symphonies cassette, 4 and 8 unfinished, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

KFAI Radio cartridge, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Petit-point purse depicting musical scene, The Goldstein Museum of Design

It's a Small World record, 1964, from Karal Ann Marling, Department of Art History (faculty and staff office collections)

Blarina, Mammal Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

Madagascar hissing cockroaches, from colony in lab, Insect Collection, Department of Entomology

Aircraft transmitter and headphones, Air Force ROTC, Detachment 415

Edison wax cylinders: *Vaudeville Sketch, Fishing; Duett, Här Är Gudugodt; Summer Night's Dream Overture*

Statue of Hindu deity, Siva, eleventh to thirteenth centuries, sandstone, Weisman Art Museum

Zorba the Greek record, by Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Red Sails in the Sunset and *Young Love* records, by Tab Hunter, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Mailable Christmas record, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

In My Merry Oldsmobile record, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Romeo and Juliet Overture record, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

BOTTOM SHELF

Triton shell horn, from Paul Haack, School of Music (faculty and staff office collections)

Helmut shell horn, from Paul Haack, School of Music (faculty and staff office collections)

Encrusted shell horn, from Paul Haack, School of Music (faculty and staff office collections)

Australian trumpet shell horn from the Great Barrier Reef, from Paul Haack, School of Music (faculty and staff office collections)

Sheet music, Tchaikovsky, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Handbell, Department of Physics Teaching Collection

Bugle, from Paul Haack, School of Music (faculty and staff office collections)

Hawaiian bamboo flute, played with nose, from Paul Haack, School of Music (faculty and staff office collections)

Bandera, Immigration History Research Center

Bandera cloth, Immigration History Research Center

Organ pipe, Department of Physics Teaching Collection

Guitar-shaped whistle, Children's Literature Research Collections

Madagascar hissing cockroach, Insect Collection, Department of Entomology

Cabinet of the Allegory of History

TOP OF CABINET

Globe, DG Company of Chicago, 1950s, James Ford Bell Library

TOP SHELF

Sound Blaster sound card, manufactured by Creative Technologies Ltd., Singapore, 1997, Charles Babbage Institute, Center for the History of Information Technology

IBM Port-a-Punch, Charles Babbage Institute, Center for the History of Information Technology

Object code punched cards, for Burroughs 5500 computer, c. 1960, Charles Babbage Institute, Center for the History of Information Technology

Facit adding machine, Sweden, 1947, Charles Babbage Institute, Center for the History of Information Technology

Nuclear bomb effects computer, distributed by the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, manufactured by Lovelace Foundation, Charles Babbage Institute, Center for the History of Information Technology

"Nixie" vacuum tube, manufactured by the Burroughs Corporation, c. 1955, Charles Babbage Institute, Center for the History of Information Technology

Comptometer mechanical adding machine, manufactured by Felt & Tarrant Manufacturing Co., Chicago, c. 1920, Charles Babbage Institute, Center for the History of Information Technology

Punched paper tape, Stanford Research Institute, 1964, Charles Babbage Institute, Center for the History of Information Technology

Core memory plane, aluminum frame strung wit copper wire, c. 1965, Charles Babbage Institute, Center for the History of Information Technology

SECOND SHELF

Brenner Cup, the YMCA's first national basketball championship, c. 1923, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, YMCA of the USA

Victory Garden sign, 1944, Andersen Horticultural Library

Norman Borlaug medal, University of Minnesota Archives

University Circus first-prize trophy for "Best Side Show," 1903, University of Minnesota Archives

Tear-gas grenade handle from Vietnam War demonstration on University of Minnesota campus, 1972, University of Minnesota Archives

Souvenir drinking glass from the 1964 World's Fair, New York City, from Lyndel King, Weisman Art Museum (faculty and staff office collections)

Corncob exhibiting control of gene action by transposable DNA elements, from the laboratory of Nobel Prize winner Barbara McClintock, College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences

Pen used to sign the Food Stamp Act, 1964, The Humphrey Forum

Bowler hat belonging to Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey, The Humphrey Forum

Russian hat belonging to Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey, The Humphrey Forum

Ceremonial dish inscribed to Roy Wilkins, The Humphrey Forum

Armband from University of Minnesota demonstration against the Vietnam War, 1970, University of Minnesota Archives

Red Cross nurse's hat, School of Nursing Alumni Collection

Harvard tercentenary medallion, University of Minnesota Archives

Ribbons of immigrant fraternal organizations, Immigration History Research Center

THIRD SHELF

University Chapel Bible, 1851–78, University of Minnesota Archives

Statue of Isis, wood, polychrome, gilded face, 350 BC, Weisman Art Museum

Statuette, China, Ming Dynasty, cast bronze, Weisman Art Museum

Buddhist devotional figure, bronze, eighteenth century, Weisman Art Museum

Apollo as god of the arts, porcelain, c. 1770, Weisman Art Museum

Paul Bunyan's ring, Children's Literature Research Collections

Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox, ceramic figurines, Children's Literature Research Collections

Black dragon figurine from *The Funny Thing*, by Wanda Gág, Children's Literature Research Collections

Pinocchio marionette, Children's Literature Research Collections

BOTTOM SHELF

Glazed stoneware jug, Weisman Art Museum

Ceramic cup and plate made at Hull House, Chicago, Social Welfare History Archives

Teapot, by Warren MacKenzie, 1988, glazed stoneware, Weisman Art Museum

Round knit doily, c. 1900–1930, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Hand-knotted wool rug, c. 1925–35, The Goldstein Museum of Design

Grinding stone, Mimbres culture, c. 1000–1500, Weisman Art Museum

Arts and Crafts candlesticks, by Robert Riddle Jarvie, c. 1900–1910, brass, William Gray Purcell Papers, Northwest Architectural Archives

Rookwood vase, 1916, The Goldstein Museum of Design

RIGHT OF SHELF

H Dress, 1968, used in Hubert Humphrey's presidential campaign, The Humphrey Forum

Collections

University of Minnesota Collections

University of Minnesota Herbarium, Bell Museum of Natural History

ANITA CHOLEWA

The University of Minnesota Herbarium had its official beginning in 1889, when the Board of Regents approved the purchase of J. H. Sandberg's private herbarium, numbering 6,000 specimens, to be included in the newly formed Botany Department. Conway Macmillan, the first botany professor at the university and state botanist with the Geological and Natural History Survey of Minnesota, laid the major foundations of the Herbarium. He acquired J. W. Congdon's collection of California plants, E. W. Holway's extensive New World rust collection, and L. R. Moyer's collection of prairie plants from southwestern Minnesota.

Until the end of the Second World War, the Botany Department was extremely active in plant exploration. Major faculty collectors at the time included E. P. Sheldon (Minnesota flora), A. A. Heller (western United States and Hawaii), J. Tilden (Pacific Northwest and South Pacific islands), F. K. Butters (United States), and C. O. Rosendahl (Upper Midwest). Many specimens were added to the collections through staff and graduate student collecting and herbarium exchanges until the collection numbered approximately 390,000 in 1946.

Under Gerald Ownbey's direction (1947–86), the Herbarium doubled in size to approximately 780,000 by July 1986. This increase was especially due to the collecting efforts of John W. Moore, state botanist with the Herbarium, who had been an avid plant explorer, collecting throughout Minnesota, the Dakotas, and several of the Pacific islands. His collections number well over 30,000 and are a significant contribution to the flora of Minnesota and Pacifica. During this period the Herbarium also purchased nearly 60,000 specimens from the Missouri Botanical Garden, mainly representing the flora of the southern United States.

In the years since 1986 the Herbarium has accessioned more than 100,000 specimens. This growth was due in large part to professor and curator Clifford Wetmore, who surveyed international lichens. Additionally, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has contributed approximately 20,000 specimens as part of its County Biological Survey and Natural Heritage Programs, documenting several species previously unknown to the state and even a few records unknown to the U.S. flora as well as documenting new locations of rare plants.

Today the University of Minnesota Herbarium maintains its position as sixth largest among academic herbaria and thirteenth largest overall nationwide. Accessions, including all plants, fungi, algae, and lichens, number about 820,000. It is the most complete collection of Minnesota's flora, the most

comprehensive representation of the Upper Midwest's flora, one of the better collections of north temperate floras, one of the best overall lichen collections, and one of the best collections of plant pathogens.

Since its inception, the Herbarium has been much more than a simple state repository. Our collections are utilized by a wide variety of researchers from the University of Minnesota and other institutions, studying evolutionary relationships, paleoecological trends, ethnobotanical issues, and more. The state Department of Natural Resources and environmental consultants frequently visit our collections to verify specimens collected as part of their work, and students in horticulture and botany are exposed to plants from all over the world, partly through the use of our specimens as demonstration materials.

Our more interesting specimens include our oldest specimen, an orchid from Russia, collected in 1800, and our oldest Minnesota specimen, a relative of evening primroses, collected in 1849. The holdings include a collection of the flora of the lower Orinoco Delta in Venezuela, collected in the late nineteenth century by the Orinoco Company Ltd. of Faribault, Minnesota. The collection also contains samples of the world's smallest flowering plant and plants that are now extinct in the wild. There are examples of medicinally important plants, such as quinine and digitalis; economically valuable plants, such as mahogany, chocolate, and cocaine; food plants such as corn, soybean, coffee, and nutmeg; and many other plants, fungi, and lichens whose significance to humans is yet to be determined.

The Herbarium became an official unit of the Bell Museum of Natural History in 1997. As part of the museum, our mission is dedicated to exploring the diversity of life in the natural world and to promoting an understanding and appreciation of nature through excellence in collections, education, and research.

University of Minnesota Insect Collection

PHILIP J. CLAUSEN AND RALPH W. HOLZENTHAL

The University of Minnesota Insect Collection is housed within the Department of Entomology in Hodson Hall on the St. Paul campus of the University of Minnesota. It is funded primarily as a project of the Agricultural Experiment Station of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences. The collection currently ranks among the top ten university collections in North America.

The museum collection now contains more than 3.26 million specimens of 47,000 species, including 1,990 primary and 31,691 secondary types. Specimens are not only used by researchers, both graduate students and faculty at the University of Minnesota, but are also loaned to researchers at other museums and universities around the world. Thus this collection is an essential state, national, and world resource for the study of insect taxonomy and biodiversity. These specimens provide the permanent physical record of the identity, diversity, and distribution of the insect fauna of Minnesota, much of the United States, and many parts of the world. Furthermore, insect specimens in this collection are used by personnel within the Department of Entomology, the Extension Service, the Yard and Garden Clinic, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, the College of Natural Resources, the Nature Conservancy, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

The collection is a reference to identify both beneficial and harmful insect species in agricultural, urban, and natural settings. Insects are critically important in these areas because they are (1) a food resource for many native fish and wildlife species; (2) important pests of agricultural crops as well as native and exotic plants; (3) valuable in the control of insects and plant species, or as pollinators of crops or native plants. The collection also supports research and graduate education in systematic and taxonomic entomology. In addition, the specimens in this collection are essential as tools for educating the general public as to the values of nature and biodiversity.

Annual accessions often exceed 50,000 to 100,000 specimens. Early interests centered on specimens from Minnesota and the surrounding states; more recently, research interests have been on the tropics.

The collection has grown from expeditions to South and Central America, specifically to Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru, Trinidad, Tobago, Bolivia, French Guiana, Venezuela, and Brazil. There have also been recent expeditions to Africa (Kenya, Ghana, and Cameroon) and to Southeast Asia (Malaysia, the island of Biak, and Irian Jaya).

The collection started in 1879 with insects and spiders from the North Shore of Lake Superior, collected by C. W. Hall. From 1879 to 1888, the museum grew with specimens, mostly aphids, collected by O. W. Oestlund. The real growth of the collection occurred after 1888, the year following passage of the Hatch Act by the U.S. Congress and when the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station was established, with Otto Lugger appointed entomologist and botanist for the station. He built the museum up to about 180,000 specimens by the time of his death in 1901, partly by his personal collecting but also by exchange and purchase of specimens from collectors here in the United States and abroad. In 1914, funding for the maintenance of the insect collection was accomplished through its establishment as a formal Experiment Station Project, where its funding still primarily remains. After Lugger, the museum grew to its present size, largely through the work of many other researchers, their students, and curators. A few of these include A. G. Ruggles, A. A. Granovsky, C. E. Mickel, E. F. Cook, R. D. Price, J. R. Beer, F. W. Stehr, K. C. Kim, P. J. Clausen, and R. W. Holzenthal.

Before 1888, the collection was probably housed on the Minneapolis campus in the Zoology Department in the Zoology building. Later it moved to the St. Paul campus ("the applied campus") to the Division of Entomology and Botany and was housed in the hall and several rooms on the third floor of Coffey Hall. While in Coffey Hall, the department changed its name several times to the Division of Entomology, the Division of Economic Zoology, the Division of Entomology and Economic Zoology, and then the Department of Entomology, Fisheries, and Wildlife. In the fall of 1968, Hodson Hall was completed and the entire collection was moved to its present location there. Later the department split into Entomology and Fisheries and Wildlife, and the collection remains in what is now the Department of Entomology.

The significant taxonomic and historical holdings of the insect museum or collection are as follows:

- The Otto Lugger collection, primarily Coleoptera (beetles), approximately 50,000 specimens
- The C. E. Mickel collection of Mutillidae (velvet ants), 27,000 specimens, including 282 primary types
- The Guthrie collection of Collembola (springtails), 100,000 specimens
- The Oestlund and Granovsky collection of Aphididae (aphids), 270,000 specimens
- The A. G. Richards collection of Noctuidae (noctuid moths), 20,000 specimens
- The T. N. Ananthakrishnan collection of Thysannoptera (thrips), 15,000 specimens
- The R. D. Price collection of Mallophaga (chewing lice or bird and mammal lice), 216,000 specimens
- The D. G. Denning and R.W. Holzenthal collections of Trichoptera (caddis flies), 400,000 specimens

We believe that the Insect Collection was the first major collection to have its holdings listed in detail by number of specimens and species in each order and family with totals, location, and storage method, as well as all loans, handled by a computerized management system. R. A. Hellenthal, now at the University of Notre Dame, developed this system in 1972.

Veterinary Anatomy Museum

VICTOR COX

The University of Minnesota's Veterinary Anatomy Museum contains a collection of teaching specimens that supplement the anatomy program of the College of Veterinary Medicine. Most of the specimens are derived from common domestic animals, especially dogs, cats, cattle, and horses. The collection also includes specimens as diverse as a mouse skeleton and an elephant skull with brain. For fifty years, deceased animals from Como Zoo have been added to the collection. More recently, contributions have come from the Minnesota Zoo and the University of Minnesota Raptor Center. Complete skeletons of nondomestic animals include a bull elk, dromedary camel, dolphin, chevrotain, white-tailed deer, owl, spider monkey, iguana, and snakes. The dried-foot collection includes feet of an alpaca, Bactrian camel, elk, emu, llama, pronghorn antelope, ostrich, tapir, zebra, and many others. Veterinary students are taught in class about the differences between horns and antlers and then see these differences illustrated by museum examples from elk, caribou, white-tailed deer, red deer, pronghorn, musk ox, cattle, bison, goat, and sheep. Several examples of antlers in the early growth stage (velvet) have been preserved by freeze-drying.

While formalin-fixed cadavers or wet specimens are the most obvious tools of gross anatomy instruction, they have a short shelf life and are difficult to handle and store because of toxic vapors and fluids associated with them. In contrast, the museum specimens are dry, permanent, and nontoxic.

The collection includes both skeletal and soft tissue specimens. Additionally, there are plastic casts of blood vessels and joint cavities. While skeletal material is easy to prepare, the study of anatomy is meaningless without knowledge of the soft tissues that impart movement and purpose to skeletons. Since the major component of soft tissue is water, removal of water by air-drying at room temperature results in structural distortion due to shrinkage. Freeze-drying and plastination have been used to preserve the structural integrity of the soft tissue specimens in the collection. The plastination process involves dehydration with acetone, followed by silicone impregnation of the specimen as acetone is removed by a vacuum pump. The silicone-impregnated specimen is then polymerized by exposure to a gas catalyst so that the silicone is transformed from a liquid to a flexible solid. Plastination has been especially helpful in preservation of cartilage, which distorts and cracks when dried by any other method. Cartilage is especially important in the respiratory system, where it provides structural support for most airways. The Veterinary Anatomy Museum has specimens of nasal cartilage, larynx, and trachea.

Corrosion casting involves infusion of a liquid plastic into vascular spaces or joint cavities where it hardens. Then the surrounding soft tissue is removed by acid corrosion, leaving a cast of the vessels or joint space. While many anatomy museums have vascular corrosion casts, the Minnesota Veterinary Anatomy Museum contains the largest collection of skeletal vascular casts anywhere because the technique was developed by a former faculty member, Dr. Walter Mackey. Since acid dissolves bones, Dr. Mackey used dermestid beetles to remove the soft tissue, leaving the skeleton as well as the vascular cast intact. These specimens are particularly useful for teaching because, by demonstrating their relationship to the skeleton, the vessels are put in a meaningful context. Vascular casts that employ red for arteries and blue for veins are especially colorful.

The internal structure of horse limbs is demonstrated by band-saw sections of frozen limbs that have been freeze-dried. Detailed dissections of horse limbs have been preserved by plastination. A series of specimens dissected to various levels of depth reveal both superficial and deeper structures. Likewise, a group of plastinated brains shows superficial and deep structures far better than wet specimens in jars.

The frontal and maxillary sinuses of several species are demonstrated by skulls that have windows cut in the outer bone plates to show the underlying sinuses. Similar specimens reveal the roots of teeth within sockets that have been exposed by removal of overlying bone on the external surface of the tooth socket (alveolus).

The study of veterinary anatomy includes determining the age of animals by observation of their teeth and the growth plates of bones. Therefore, the collection includes equine skulls from newborn to thirty-eight years of age. Age-related changes in development of the ruminant stomach are demonstrated by inflated, dry stomachs of newborn, young, and mature animals.

The purpose of anatomy in a medical curriculum is to prepare students for courses such as pathology and surgery. Therefore, examples of pathological specimens with anatomic significance are used to illustrate the importance of various anatomic subjects. The Veterinary Anatomy Museum contains the largest known collection of pelvic skeletal pathology specimens. The bony lesions include fractures, luxations, ankylosis of the sacroiliac joint, and hip dysplasia of cattle, dogs, and a horse.

No anatomy museum would be complete without a collection of developmental anomalies. Heading up this part of the collection is a two-headed calf skull. Cleft palates are represented by five bovine specimens, several puppies, a pig, and a raccoon. Hydrocephalus and cyclopia are represented by several foals and pigs. Polydactyaly (extra digits) is demonstrated by feline and equine specimens.

While the Veterinary Anatomy Museum collection is mainly used for teaching veterinary students, it also is utilized as a reference source for forensic and research purposes. Bones found in excavations are often brought to the Veterinary Anatomy Museum to be compared with known specimens in order to identify unknown bones.

In several ways the Veterinary Anatomy collection complements live animal collections in zoos. For both humane and aesthetic reasons, modern zoos place animals in large habitats that are comfortable for the animals but make them more difficult to observe. In contrast, the specimens in the Veterinary Anatomy Museum allow observers to see features of feet, horns, and antlers in a hands-on fashion, and the underlying skeleton and some organs can be examined in detail. Access to the museum collection is limited by lack of adequate staffing, but images of museum specimens are being placed on its web site, http://vanat.cvm.umn.edu/museum/.

Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies

STEPHEN C. FEINSTEIN

Issues like the Holocaust and genocide are filled with stories of tragedy as well as human valor. An aftereffect of such events is to produce curious artifacts that sometimes defy rational explanations. Among the items in the small and informal collection of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies (CHGS) are a large framed portrait of Adolf Hitler, which was pulled off the wall of a building in Germany by an American G.I. in 1945; several Nazi flags and banners, one of which was reported to have been shot off a church in the Saar, Germany; and a set of Luftwaffe aluminum dinnerware, stamped with the Nazi swastika. More curious are stamped envelopes used by non-Jewish inmates from the Dachau and Auschwitz concentration and death camps; a few examples of anti-Semitic "Notgeld," a form of temporary money issued in Germany in 1922 and 1923 with anti-Semitic images; anti-Semitic stamps issued by the government of Serbia in 1941; and paper money from the ghettos of Theresienstadt and Lodz.

The Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies was established in 1997 as part of the Department of History in the College of Liberal Arts. The Center organizes and supports academic courses about the Nazi extermination of the Jews and Roma/Sinti as well as other genocides that took place in the twentieth century in Armenia, Bosnia, Iraqi Kurdistan, East Timor, and Rwanda and those that continue into the current century. The Center supports the growing need for Holocaust and genocide education in the public schools through an extensive outreach program providing materials as well as seminars and workshops for teachers.

The Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies is conceived of as an academic center, not as a museum or archive. Nevertheless, artworks, photographs, and artifacts play crucial roles in memory, and

they have been collected gradually by the Center. Many Holocaust museums have opened in the United States, but none exists in the Twin Cities. While we do not plan to have a museum in the near future, the Center has created an effective web site with a "virtual museum" that has received more than fifteen million visits at http://www.chgs.umn.edu. Our web site is recognized as one of the most important sources for cataloguing and documenting artistic responses to the Holocaust and genocide. The real objects and papers acquired by the Center are also valuable teaching tools.

One of the first contributions to the Center was the total collection of the personal papers of the Elguther family. The Elguthers were German Jews who fled to Shanghai, China, in 1938 and remained there until after the end of World War II. To come to the United States, the family had to return to Germany, armed with "stateless passports," in order to get visas as refugees. (One of their stateless passports was displayed in *Cabinet of Curiosities*.) The Elguthers eventually settled in western Wisconsin. In 1998, when our Center was offered the papers, we graciously accepted them. The family member who gave them asked, while crying, "Did *it* [the Holocaust] really happen?" I had to confirm for her that, indeed, it was a real event.

The Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies has also acquired donations of art, including a series of photographs by Maxine Rude. Rude was a World War II army photographer who photographed the displaced persons camps after the war. A native of Viroqua, Wisconsin, Rude donated sixty-nine framed works to CHGS. They have been displayed in the Twin Cities, at the University of Wisconsin branches at River Falls and La Crosse, and at other sites across the country. In 2001, they were shown at the Katherine E. Nash Gallery at the University of Minnesota. They can be viewed through our web site at http://chgs.hispeed.com/Visual_Artistic_Resources/Maxine_Rude/maxine_rude.html.

Another interesting donation was the Ex Libris collection of Fritz Stransky. Stransky was a lawyer from Prague who died at Auschwitz during the Holocaust. A neighbor saved his collection of 1,100 original bookplates. Stransky's daughter acquired the collection and, after storing it in a suitcase in a closet for forty years, donated it to CHGS. Because these were all original artworks, some signed by noted artists, the bookplates were transferred to the permanent collection of the Weisman Art Museum, where a selection of the collection was on display in 2001 in the exhibition *A Precarious Legacy of Hitler's Europe: The Fritz Stransky Collection.*

For *Mark Dion: Cabinet of Curiosities,* CHGS offered four items. Besides the stateless passport from the Elguther family, there was a copy of Hans Hauptmann's *Jesus der Arier (Jesus the Aryan)* published in German in 1930. The title is not innocent. Crucifixion paintings are replete with the mocking epitaph on the cross of Jesus indicating INRI, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." There is no doubt that Jesus was a Jew; the biblical narrative suggests the "messiah" figure had to come from the House of David. With the rise of Nazism, the figure of Jesus became a problem. An attack on German and European Jews inevitably meant an attack on Christianity. Christian principles of "loving thy neighbor as thyself" and "the meek shall inherit the earth" made no sense in terms of Nazi doctrine. The book is thus a wake-up call that most people, especially Christians, ignored during the period 1933 to 1945: the essence of Nazism was neo-paganism and would have undoubtedly resulted in the abolition of Christianity if the Nazis had succeeded. More to the point is the assertion of philosopher Emile Fackenheim that had Jesus of Nazareth been alive in 1943, he would have died in Auschwitz.

Another item displayed in the Weisman exhibition was a 1997 reproduction of a 1950s American children's toy, "Authentic Battle of the Little Big Horn Action Figures and Playset." This is a typical toy that many middle-class American children would have owned in this period. Part of an "American Hero Collector Series," it is also a game of genocide, based on an event that occurred on the Great Plains of the United States in 1876. It features figures of the Seventh Cavalry, such as General George Armstrong Custer, Thomas Custer, and William W. Cooke, plus Indian leaders Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull. The set has some pedagogical value: a history of the battle and surrounding events is described in its materials. The essential

aspect of the set is that American soldiers were supposed to attack the Indians. While the battle led to the annihilation of 215 Americans, the toy nevertheless allows children to replay and possibly even "win" the battle. This is certainly an interesting item to think about the history of the American West from the "victims'" viewpoint—Native Americans, who lost the West, while Custer, for a long period, was recognized as a hero.

The final item displayed at the Weisman was a photo album of a young German, G. Reutlinger, which was purchased from an eBay dealer in the Twin Cities. The album is green with a maroon Nazi swastika on the cover. The black pages contain more than one hundred photographs of this young man's experience as a soldier in the Wehrmacht between April 1, 1939, and December 28, 1939. His red Nazi arm emblem and his unit patch are glued into the book. Except for photographs that show him wearing a gas mask or throwing hand grenades, most images look like summer camp. Drawings of shooting angles for targeting an encampment are also included. The last photograph is one of Reutlinger. We do not know what happened to him—whether he became a killer or was just a victim of a diabolical era of the twentieth century. We may never know the answer.

These objects are curious and strange if we think that humans are incapable of genocide. More than being curiosities, however, they are evidence of genocide during the twentieth century. They are important to collect and display as physical reminders of crimes of high proportions.

Children's Literature Research Collections

KAREN NELSON HOYLE

The Children's Literature Research Collections (CLRC) serves as an overarching title for a library unit that brings similar special collections of children's books, manuscripts, illustrations, artifacts, journals, and related materials together. Prominent within CLRC are the Kerlan and Hess collections, but also included are the Beulah Counts Rudolph Collection of figurines, Big Little Books, Comic Books, Paul Bunyan, Periodicals, *Oz, Struwwelpeter, Treasure Island,* and others.

The first was the Kerlan Collection, founded at the University of Minnesota in 1949 when Irvin Kerlan, M.D., gave his private holdings. He donated and later bequeathed at his death in 1963 a total of 9,000 books and manuscripts, along with illustrations for 1,200 works. By 2001, the Kerlan Collection numbered 75,000 children's books and manuscripts and illustrations for 10,000 titles.

Authors and artists occasionally inscribe the first printings of their books before donating them or do so when they visit, continuing a practice begun by Dr. Kerlan. Newbery and Caldecott Awards were the keystone to his private collection of distinguished writing and illustrations. Since the late 1960s, collection development extended to include Honor Books, the Mildred L. Batchelder Awards for translations, and the Coretta Scott King Awards for African Americans. Manuscripts by Katherine Paterson and Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, art by Tomie dePaola and Charles Mikolaycak, books by Astrid Lindgren in Swedish and English, and manuscripts by Walter Dean Myers and Jacqueline Woodson are among the treasures in the collection. Books, original manuscripts, and studies for book illustrations attract users and viewers to the library holdings.

George H. Hess Jr. bequeathed his collection of 50,000 items—dime novels, story papers, paperbound libraries, and boys and girls series books—to the University of Minnesota in 1954. Dime novels published from 1860 to 1915 appealed in their subject matter of frontier stories, mystery, science fiction, and sports, later superseded by pulp magazines. Collectors such as Denis R. Rogers, specializing in the author Edward S. Ellis, and Donald Osier, focusing on Ace Publications, along with others, have expanded this popular culture collection through gifts.

Through the generosity of private collectors, in-depth studies can be conducted at the collection in several different formats. The Beulah Counts Rudolph Collection comprises five hundred figurines of

book characters, which frequently enhance our exhibits. Another five hundred Big Little Books, 1,200 comic books (including *Classics Illustrated*), several hundred journal titles for children and about children's literature, and specialized collections by title complete the holdings.

The University of Minnesota Libraries' CLRC, housed in the university's Elmer L. Andersen Library, is open to the public as well as to authors, illustrators, and researchers. Exhibits and public lectures draw individuals and families to the building. Scholars, students, editors, authors, and illustrators consult its manuscript drafts and original art. While individuals study in the reading room, university classes meet or hear visiting speakers in the conference or lecture spaces.

The CLRC brings together both classic and popular culture children's books and their respective manuscripts and illustrations for the university's "teaching, research, and service" mission. University of Minnesota faculty and students in design, education, English, family studies, foreign languages, history, journalism, sociology, and other disciplines use the collection for teaching and research. Guests give talks in the classrooms, which can hold more than two hundred people in lecture style. Classes visit from other colleges in the metropolitan area, and faculty and students have come from the Dakotas, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Rhode Island, Texas, and Utah, as well as from universities in Germany, Japan, and Scandinavia, to study our unique resources.

Writers of humor (such as Paula Danziger and Judy Delton), mystery (John Bellairs and Joan Lowery Nixon), and history (Russell Freedman and Jean Fritz) are among those who can be studied. The Archives Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) provides CLRC with copies of children's poetry books by the recipients of the NCTE Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children. Manuscripts by NCTE Award winners Barbara Esbensen, Myra Cohn Livingston, and Eve Merriam are in the Kerlan Collection.

One of the special subjects for collecting prose for children and picture books is Minnesota, with attention to the subjects of immigration and the Ojibwe and Dakota Indian tribes. Minnesota authors such as Marion Dane Bauer, Richard Mosher, Phyllis Root, and Jane Resh Thomas give their manuscripts to CLRC. Minnesota artists Betsy Bowen and Wanda Gág factor prominently in the collection.

Service or outreach activities include creating traveling exhibits, hosting our annual Kerlan Award events, making portfolio loans, and answering reference questions from the community. The collection staff and volunteers, including a retired teacher, created a video, "This Is the Kerlan Collection," and an accompanying portfolio of original illustrations to loan to schools and libraries in the area. Since then, the collection and volunteers from the Kerlan Friends have developed several portfolios of children's books and laminated facsimiles of illustrations, which are loaned to public schools for a nominal fee.

Reference works and our web site resources at http://special.lib.umn.edu/clrc/ also extend the research possibilities of CLRC. Microfilm copies of Beadle & Adams and Stratemeyer publications move study beyond the reading room. *Girls Series Books, 1840–1991,* marked with CLRC holdings, was available as a paperbound publication and is now on the CLRC web site. *The Kerlan Awards in Children's Literature, 1975–2001* was published in 2001, and *The Kerlan Collection Manuscripts and Illustrations* (1985) will be updated on the web site.

The CLRC suite in Andersen Library, a new facility completed in 2000, consists of a reading room, processing area, exhibit space, and staff areas. More exhibit areas and conference and lecture rooms are nearby. State-of-the-art storage is close by within the Andersen Library building, and materials are brought to the reading room as requested by users.

Department of Special Collections and Rare Books

TIMOTHY J. JOHNSON

The University Libraries' Department of Special Collections and Rare Books now contains more than eighty different collections and a quarter million volumes. But the department, like the Mark Dion exhibit, began as a kind of cabinet of curiosities or, to be more precise, as a small locked vault. In the early days of the library (1869–1924), curiosities and rarities were part of the domain of the University Librarian, who made book-buying trips to England and the Continent and arranged meetings with dealers to purchase items in the fields of history and literature that might both strengthen the curriculum and add to the prestige of the library. In 1913 and 1914, for example, University Librarian James Thayer Gerould bought a number of cuneiform tablets from the dealer Edgar James Banks. These tablets now reside in Special Collections and represent the earliest forms of writing found in our collections. In a happy marriage of early writing and latest technology, the tablets can now be viewed on the Internet through our web site at http://special.lib.umn.edu/rare/cuneiform/index.html.

In the mid-1920s, Walter Library was built and its rarities found a new home—a small safe and a locked, fireproof vault within the library. At about this time, *Minneapolis Journal* publisher and bibliophile Hershel Victor Jones donated his collection of seventeenth-century newspapers to the library. During a tour of the new building, Jones asked to see his gift and was led to this small sanctuary, where he was comforted by the security and respect shown his collection. That distinctive collection of Stuart tracts and newspapers expanded, through the efforts of Gerould and scholar and dean Guy Stanton Ford, into an English history collection numbered in 1921 at more than 4,500 items.

History and literature (both English and American) continued as subject strengths in developing the collection, which laid the foundations for Special Collections and Rare Books. As the collections in Walter Library grew, the outlines of a future department began to take shape. More reading room space was secured in the Upson Room and, with the addition of another rare book collection in 1953 from the James Ford Bell Library, the library devoted more attention to rare materials. In the mid-1960s the term "special collections" was first used in the library. With the hiring of a curator of special collections, Austin McLean, and the building and occupation of the new Wilson Library on the West Bank campus in the late 1960s, the notion of a separate department of special collections and rare books took form. The collections that were firmly rooted in history and literature began to expand into other areas such as art, philosophy, religion, and science.

Today, Special Collections and Rare Books, now kept in the state-of-the-art Elmer L. Andersen Library, can claim to house the broadest collection of printed materials within the University Libraries system. The collections represent more than six thousand years of written and printed history. In addition to the small cuneiform collection, the department holds papyri, medieval manuscripts, early printed books and newspapers, modern first editions, and artist's books. The collections also contain the world's largest assemblage of materials related to Sherlock Holmes, an active and important collection of African American literature (the Givens Collection), a growing and significant collection related to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender studies (the Tretter Collection), and Swedish Americana (the Dahllöf Collection). One may find a marvelous set of materials on the history of photomechanics (the Mertle Collection), a key collection on Austrian history and culture (the Kann Collection), scores and other items related to silent-film music (the Kleiner Collection), and a vital collection of modern Greek literature (the Laourdas Collection).

From books and illustrations of hot air balloons to vintage postcards, from World War I pamphlets to the private library of former governor and book collector Elmer L. Andersen, the department continues to collect, care for, and make accessible many of the valuable gems of the University Libraries. Together, these collections—along with many others, both large and small—provide the University of Minnesota with a wealth of materials for teaching, research, and outreach.

Weisman Art Museum

LYNDEL KING

A university museum collection "should have a workshop character, as opposed to most people's notion of a museum as a place for the safekeeping of rare objects" is the advice Hudson Walker, the Weisman's first director, gave to University of Minnesota President Lotus Coffman in 1934, the year the museum was founded. The Little Gallery (its original name) was started by Coffman and his assistant, Malcolm Willey, to bring art into the lives of every student at the university and every individual in the community. Coffman described growing up in rural Indiana, where he had no access to the arts—"to the things that make life worth living . . . to the cultural inheritances of the [human] race." He went on: "There is a need for new values to sustain the morale of individuals in the days ahead. The arts are a source for such values, and I want this university to play a leading part in instilling them."

Walker advised the university to form an art collection rather than just having a place for temporary exhibitions. A collection would provide "anchorage," Walker said. He recommended that the university not try to imitate the well-established Minneapolis Institute of Arts by forming a general collection—an encyclopedia of world art—but instead should focus on an area not well known to students and not well represented in other local public collections: contemporary American art. Walker was an art dealer for a short time, but primarily he was a patron and friend to American artists. Though he never lived in Minnesota after the mid-1930s, he did not forget the gallery and his advice. He gave the American art collection he formed with his wife, Ione, to the University of Minnesota when he died in 1976, and his bequest of more than 1,200 pieces still represents a strong core of the museum's American painting collection.

Marsden Hartley was one of the artists Walker represented and later befriended. Walker once traded a Hartley painting for a set of false teeth for the artist, who died in relative poverty in 1943. In the 1990s Robert Hughes, art critic for *Time* magazine, labeled Hartley "the most brilliantly gifted" of all the American modernists. Because Hudson Walker was loyal to artists, and didn't forget his roots in Minneapolis, the Weisman is the only museum in the world that can show from its own collection a complete retrospective of Marsden Hartley, who is now in the top rank of American artists of the twentieth century.

After Walker left the university, Willey and Coffman looked around for a likely candidate to keep their little museum running—and found Ruth Lawrence. She was not an art historian or even a career woman; she was a housewife, mother, and hostess for her husband, one of the university's vice presidents in the finance area. After her husband's suicide, the university felt the need to offer Lawrence some means of support and, after debating about whether she should be a student counselor or the art museum director, decided on the latter. It was a brilliant choice.

Lawrence transformed herself into a fearless adventurer and advocate for the museum and its collection. President Coffman and Willey (the "Dads," as she called them) gamely financed "Ruthie's" monthlong trips to New York, and she introduced both of them to Georgia O'Keeffe and O'Keeffe's husband, Alfred Stieglitz. She persuaded Coffman and Willey to put up funds to purchase American paintings from Stieglitz, an eminent photographer and champion of those artists who were bringing into America ideas about what it meant to be a "modern" artist. She became a confidant to Stieglitz; he wrote to her details of O'Keeffe's health problems and spoke affectionately of "our experiment," as he called the young art museum of the University of Minnesota.

The best-loved and most-traveled works at the Weisman are undoubtedly the two paintings by Georgia O'Keeffe. They are here because of this extraordinary relationship Ruth Lawrence formed with Stieglitz and O'Keeffe. President Coffman confided to Willey that he didn't understand the O'Keeffe paintings, and he jokingly requested, "Sometime buy a picture of a pasture, with a brook and some

cows—just for me!" But he graciously supported the purchase of works by John Marin and Arthur Dove—not exactly cows in a meadow.

In 1938 Ruth Lawrence selected Lyonel Feininger's *Dröbsdorf I* to purchase from the museum's show of his work—Feininger's first retrospective in America. That was the last painting she purchased with university funds. The death of President Coffman late that year was likely a factor in the termination of university funding for art. It was the end of an era for the art collection at the university. Since then, the collection has grown by gifts and bequests from many supportive friends, but not by major purchases. By 1936, two years after the museum was founded, there were 106 works of art in the collection. Today there are approximately 20,000.

The collection of American art from the first half of the twentieth century, built by Walker and Lawrence, remains the strength of the collection, and many of those artworks are masterpieces. Other objects are here for other reasons. Hylton Thomas, a professor of art history who died in 1969, left the museum funds to purchase European art. Though that has never been a particular strength of the collection, his funds purchased a seventeenth-century Italian fresco cartoon that epitomizes the "workshop character" Walker described. This drawing would not be appropriate in most museums because it was meant to be thrown away. It was a pattern—an intermediate step in the process of fresco painting. It is not something that would be appreciated or displayed on its own, but every year, for decades, students have inspected it to understand how an Italian baroque fresco was made.

Edward Wright Jr. understood the connections between Minnesota and Korea. Wright administered the Fulbright Program in Korea in the years following the Korean War and built a collection of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Korean furniture and other artifacts. His collection, a bequest to the museum in 1987, now provides a cultural resource for the many adopted Korean children in Minnesota families (about 20 percent of all Korean adoptees in the nation) and for Korean Americans. It is a great source of pride as well as education.

Frederick R. Weisman, after whom the museum is now named, gave the Edward and Nancy Reddin Kienholz installation piece *Pedicord Apts.*, which is a particular favorite of politicians and Girl Scouts who visit the museum. The narrow dark corridor of a run-down apartment building in Spokane, Washington, that the artists made into an environmental artwork reminds them, they report, of door-to-door campaigning and selling cookies!

In 1929, University of Minnesota Professor Alfred Jenks was supported by The Minneapolis Institute of Arts to excavate a southwestern New Mexico village of the Mimbres people, an ancient Native American culture. Between 1929 and 1931 these excavations, primarily at a site called Galaz in the Mimbres River Valley, yielded more than eight hundred ceramic bowls. These were transferred to the museum in 1993 from the Department of Anthropology, and since then these lively and incredibly contemporary-looking works of art have been the subject of publications, exhibitions, and intensive research. The museum has one of the two largest collections of Mimbres material in the world.

Ceramic artist Warren MacKenzie, a member of the university's art faculty from 1953 to 1990, used the museum's collection constantly for teaching. With his wife, Nancy, he has donated not only his own work but that of leading ceramic artists from around the world, making ceramics, with American modernism, a significant feature of the Weisman's collection.

When the museum moved to its new facility, a building designed by Frank Gehry, in 1993, two giant works of pop art were rediscovered. Two murals painted for the 1964 New York World's Fair, by James Rosenquist and Roy Lichtenstein, were given to the university by the artists a few years after the fair. At that time the museum, located in the university's auditorium building, did not have walls large enough to show this art. But the university did have a lot of brick buildings, and because these paintings had been shown outdoors in New York, it may have been intended that they would cover some of that brick exterior expanse on campus. Fortunately that never happened; the Minnesota climate would have ensured

that the murals would no longer exist. Now a laughing redhead, typical of Roy Lichtenstein's comic-book style, welcomes every visitor who comes through the Weisman's front door. Rosenquist's collage-like painting of Uncle Sam's top hat and other symbols of American consumerism and pride attracts a glance from every student who looks into the large windows of the museum's galleries while walking past on the way to the next-door student union, aptly named after Lotus Coffman, who began it all.

Collections of the Newton Horace Winchell School of Earth Sciences

KENT C. KIRKBY

The collections of the Department of Geology and Geophysics are actually older than the department itself. Newton Horace Winchell began the collections when he was hired by the state legislature to establish a Minnesota geological and natural history survey. He became state geologist in the spring of 1872, and that fall he also became the university's first professor of geology and mineralogy. It would take another two years, though, before Geology and Mineralogy was officially established as a university department.

The collections have grown from Winchell's few rock cabinets into a huge amalgamation of rock, fossil, mineral, and sediment samples from across the globe and housed in three different campus buildings. The eclectic nature of this collection reflects the shifting interests of more than 125 years of geology research at the University of Minnesota as new faculty and graduate students moved through the department ranks. The most recent additions are the lake sediment core collections of the Limnological Research Center and LacCore, the U.S. National Lacustrine Core Repository. Despite being relatively new collections, these two repositories already house 6,000 meters of sediment cores from lake bottoms across North America, South America, Africa, Europe, and China. Because lake systems are very sensitive to changes in the surrounding environment, these lake cores represent some of the most important regional records of climate change during the past few thousand years.

The Limnological Research Center and the U.S. National Lacustrine Core Repository are curator-run, climate-controlled research archives. In contrast, the rest of the department's extensive holdings receives very little active curatorship. Over the years there have been various attempts at curatorship, but these efforts typically focused only on certain parts of the collections, and all were eventually abandoned as individuals moved on or as funding waned. Recently, the Department of Geology and Geophysics began another effort to determine what materials are in its collections, but the sheer volume of the holdings makes this a daunting endeavor.

One of the larger components of the collections is the paleontology research collection housed in the basement of the Bell Museum of Natural History. Fifty cabinets hold thousands of fossils collected primarily from Minnesota and North America, with a generous sampling of fossils collected internationally. Hundreds of these fossils are "type specimens"—the original fossil samples on which the description of a fossil species is based. Paleontologists compare descriptions of these type specimens to new material to determine whether the new finds should be properly considered the same species; uncertain cases are often resolved by direct study of the physical samples in the collection.

Within the two-foot-thick sandstone walls of Pillsbury Hall, 170 metal cabinets hold 120 cubic meters of rock, mineral, and fossil samples. Most of this material consists of samples collected as part of faculty and graduate research projects, but the cabinets also contain a number of teaching collections acquired by individual faculty. Even these cabinets hold only a fraction of the department's total holdings. Boxes of samples also fill part of Pillsbury's cavernous attic and nearly all of the subbasement, transforming the latter into a geological catacomb, lined with tiers of dusty wooden crates full of rock and fossil samples that spill out onto the sand-covered floors. Many of these are thesis samples from past graduate

research that form the archive set of samples for each student's thesis project. These archive sets often include samples that were illustrated in the published literature and have great scientific value, but they also include large amounts of material that now have no appreciable historic or scientific interest. Some samples have never even been examined in the decades since tired students dropped them off at the end of a long class field trip.

As a whole, then, the department's collections form something of a great, unwinnowed "Cabinet of Curiosity" in which gems can be found, both literally and figuratively. Scattered through the cabinets and crates are rare fossils from localities now buried beneath suburban development and unusual minerals found only in remote areas that, even today, are largely inaccessible to most scientists. These rarities are disbursed among a staggeringly large amount of less important material, which historically has led to some unlikely situations.

As I write this essay, a 150-million-year-old dinosaur thighbone lies on the floor ten feet from my computer. Despite being five feet long and weighing more than 200 pounds, the bone was lost for thirty years in Pillsbury Hall until I happened across it during the renovation and expansion of our computer lab. Until a few years ago, my office had been occupied by a succession of paleontologists who had filled the office chest-deep with an amazing pack-rat assemblage of samples, past correspondence, old exams, overheads, books, and ancient bag lunches, leaving only a narrow passageway from the door to the desk. Buried among the debris were delicate type specimens, original field journals of the department's first paleontology expeditions, and remains from no less than seven American Indians. In a reflection of societal change, the latter had been taken from their original burial sites by faculty in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when such remains were viewed as samples rather than individuals. I spent a memorable Thanksgiving building caskets with my ten-year-old son so that we could return these remains to their descendants.

If gems can be found, though, it is certainly true that they can also be lost. Originally there were three separate Winchell collections held by the department: his collection for teaching; the collection he built as state geologist; and a collection acquired while he served as the geologist for Custer's Black Hills Expedition in 1874. The state geologist collection comprised the original samples on which the geology of Minnesota was subdivided into formal rock units; these samples were essentially the definitions of the rock names that described our state's geology. The Black Hills Expedition played a critical role in the history of the northern plains. General George Custer reported rich deposits of gold in the Black Hills and urged Congress to remove any Indian claim to the area. Winchell and other members of the expedition accused Custer and his prospectors of exaggerating the reports and "salting" the area with the few gold samples found. Winchell's objections were swept aside, and the Black Hills opened to prospectors, which led directly to the Plains Dakota wars, the Battle of the Little Big Horn, and the massacre at Wounded Knee—events that more than any other have come to define the Plains wars of the late nineteenth century and influence the identity of the modern Dakota people.

Both the state geologist and Black Hills Expedition collections were originally stored in Pillsbury Hall's attic. In the mid-1960s, fears arose that the combined weight of all the rock material in the attic was placing a dangerous stress on the building's wooden internal structure. Tons of samples were removed and sent to landfills. In the confusion—and with no curatorial system in place—Winchell's state geologist and Black Hills Expedition collections were also discarded, leaving only his teaching collection to survive to the present.

The costs of curatorship are high, but the costs of not having a collection curated are as real, if not as obvious. The loss of physical samples is far less important than the loss of a tangible tie to the past. The University of Minnesota collections provide a sense of who we are as a society, how we came to be, and how our society has viewed its world through time. We cannot afford to lose those connections.

Natural History Art Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

DON LUCE

Five works in *Mark Dion: Cabinet of Curiosities* were drawn from the Bell Museum's art collections: a tiny wood engraving of a raven by the eighteenth-century British artist Thomas Bewick, a large and dramatic engraving of kestrels (sparrow hawks) by the famous artist-naturalist John James Audubon, two photographs of artists at work on diorama exhibits for the Bell Museum of Natural History, and a small model accompanying those photographs that had been created in the process of planning the final version of the diorama and showed a nesting colony of cormorants with the Lake of the Woods in the background. All of these objects speak to the passion for nature, dedication to detail, and commitment to education that marks the common character of natural history art.

Among the earliest items in the Bell Museum's art collection is a series of wooden blocks engraved by Thomas Bewick between 1790 and 1804. The blocks, measuring only a few inches or less in each dimension, contain remarkably detailed images of birds revealed by minute patterns of raised lines. A commercial printer and avid naturalist, Bewick more or less invented the wood engraving technique. His blocks were cut to the same thickness as the printing type and hence could be printed together with the text, making his books affordable to a wide audience. Though he produced many illustrated books, Bewick is best known for his birds and is sometimes credited with starting the popular interest in natural history that was so characteristic of nineteenth-century Britain. In fact, Bewick's book on British birds was one of the few bird books John J. Audubon owned as he set out to portray the birds of America. In the Weisman exhibition, Bewick's woodblock for a raven was displayed with a print made from the engraved image.

More than anyone else, John James Audubon is associated with birds and bird art. A flamboyant and eccentric genius, Audubon devoted himself to his passion for birds. Unlike the illustrators that came before him, Audubon was committed to drawing his birds as he knew them in life—based on his years of observing and hunting them in the field. One of the notable characteristics of his art is the dramatic action of his subjects: he shows his birds interacting with each other, their prey, and the surrounding foliage. His compositions are visually exciting and can be appreciated from a purely formal perspective.

The production of Audubon's *Birds of America* is a saga in and of itself. In 1820 Audubon set out on his quest: to paint every species of bird, life-sized and in color. He traveled from Ohio to New Orleans and then throughout much of the East Coast. By 1826 he had amassed a large portfolio and started to look for a printer. Finding none in this country willing or able to take on the project, he left for England. The printing required the use of the largest sheets of paper then made, called double elephant folio size. The full production of the book took twelve years. It is estimated that no more than two hundred copies were produced, and the Bell Museum's complete set of Audubon's original engravings is one of fewer than a hundred still remaining. The 435 hand-colored plates, including the American Sparrow Hawk engraving displayed on the salon wall of *Cabinet of Curiosities,* still speak to us today of Audubon's romantic vision of nature.

The wildlife diorama is yet another example of the integration of art and science. First developed in the late 1800s, dioramas combined landscape painting, wildlife art, and taxidermy to communicate ecology and conservation. The Bell Museum's dioramas (one of the hallmarks of the museum) date from as early as 1911 and include the work of some of the best practitioners of the genre. From 1911 to 1919, Charles Corwin, one of the first artists to specialize in dioramas, painted the backgrounds for the caribou, white-tailed deer, Dall sheep, and beaver exhibits. About twenty of the museum's dioramas were painted by Francis Lee Jaques, considered one of the all-time masters of diorama art. To be effective, dioramas need to transport the viewer into another place and time, and the paintings need to provide accurate detail as well as stimulate the viewer's imagination. Jaques achieved the perfect balance between truth

and illusion. He grew up in northern Minnesota, worked in New York City for many years (where he created diorama art for the American Museum of Natural History), and returned to Minnesota in the 1940s to paint the exhibits at the Bell Museum. Though the museum is small, our dioramas are of a quality equal to the best in the world.

The person who led much of this early work at the museum was Thomas Sadler Roberts. A prominent local physician, Roberts retired from medicine in 1915 and joined the museum as curator and director to pursue his passion for birds. Many of the museum's oldest specimens were collected by Roberts when he was a teenager in the 1870s. His dream was to publish a comprehensive book on the bird life of Minnesota. *The Birds of Minnesota* was published in 1932 and is still considered a classic of ornithological literature. It is illustrated with ninety-two color plates by the leading bird artists of the period. Allan Brooks, Walter Weber, George Miksch Sutton, Walter Breckenridge, and Francis Lee Jaques all contributed paintings. These original watercolors are one of the highlights of the museum's art collection.

The connection between the museum and art became more explicit in the 1970s. Jaques's widow, Florence, donated a large collection of his paintings, drawings, field sketches, and book illustrations shortly after his death in 1969. In 1972, a gallery was established in the Jaqueses' honor to display his work and the work of other natural history artists. Since then, more than fifty exhibitions have been presented, including two major retrospectives of Jaques's art, which later traveled to museums across the country. In 1988, the museum opened a new and much larger changing exhibition gallery, and our programs have continued to expand.

As the Bell Museum was developing an art collection exploring the interconnections of nature and art, other museums were working on similar programs. The American Museum of Wildlife Art was established by William Webster, the founder of Wild Wings Galleries, in Lake City, Minnesota. In 1992, this museum merged with the Bell Museum, forming a much larger and more comprehensive collection. The merged collection has been highlighted in a number of exhibitions at the Bell Museum, including *Wildlife Art in America* in 1994 and *Exploring Nature's Histories and Mysteries* in 2002. Today, the Bell Museum's art collection continues to grow through donations and selective purchases. Our goal remains the same: to present art that expresses the human need to understand nature and to inspire a deeper appreciation for the earth's biological diversity.

The Givens Collection of African American Literature

KATHRYN M. NEAL

The Archie Givens, Sr. Collection of African American Literature collects, preserves, and makes available books and manuscript material that document the literary history and cultures of African Americans. Housed in the Department of Special Collections and Rare Books of the University of Minnesota Libraries, the Givens Collection includes rare books, literary manuscripts, correspondence, pamphlets, photographs, playbills, ephemera, magazines, and audiovisual media. The collection is available to students, faculty, staff, and the general public. Besides supporting research and teaching, items in the collection assist in promoting other outreach activities, such as exhibitions, public presentations, and class presentations. Because of the rarity of the material, it does not circulate, except when the staff uses selections for exhibition purposes. Researchers may review the holdings only in the Special Collections reading room.

The collection began in the hands of a private collector, Richard Lee Hoffman, a New York playwright and English professor. Hoffman started collecting books and manuscript material by or about African Americans during the 1950s. In 1985, under the auspices of the Givens Foundation, the family of Archie Givens Sr. and Phebe Mae Givens and an eleven-member Patrons' Council of African American community leaders assisted the University of Minnesota with the purchase of Hoffman's collection,

which then consisted of three thousand items. Archie Givens Sr. (1919–1974) was a successful Minneapolis businessman and entrepreneur who did not attend college but was a strong supporter of higher education, particularly for young people of color. In 1986, the collection was renamed in his honor. The Givens Foundation for African American Literature, a nonprofit public charitable organization, celebrates and promotes black literature and history through programs and continues to support the growth of the collection.

African American fictional works and related criticism make up the bulk of the collection, which now numbers about nine thousand items. Many books are autographed or inscribed by their authors. Key holdings include novels, poetry, plays, short stories, essays, literary criticism, periodicals, and biographies of writers, dating from the late eighteenth century to the present and covering such literary periods as the Harlem Renaissance and Black Arts Movement. Many works bear original book jackets that feature striking graphic artwork. The collection also includes a lesser but still significant number of nonfiction and scholarly titles relating to African American visual art, education, social sciences, sports, and the performing arts. Archival material documenting the history of black literature makes up the remainder of the collection. This manuscript material includes correspondence, pamphlets, published and unpublished literary manuscripts and poetry, screenplays, playbills, souvenir books, photographs, sheet music, and ephemera.

The many highlights of the collection include a first printing of Phillis Wheatley's *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (1773), the first book published by an African American in the colonies and the second by an American woman; the personal papers of Clarence Major, a poet, novelist, and educator who emerged as a literary artist during the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and 1970s; three different unpublished versions of Lorraine Hansberry's play *Les Blancs* (1969); and a collection of letters from Harlem Renaissance–era poet Countee Cullen to his childhood friend and literary confidant William Fuller Brown, who became a professor of electrical engineering at the University of Minnesota.

The majority of the collection's users are students and educators. Its holdings support several academic programs, primarily African American and African studies, American studies, English literature, and history. Other fields of study that benefit from the collection's holdings are art and art history, comparative literature, film studies, music, rhetoric, speech communication, theater arts, and women's studies. Documentary filmmakers and performers also find the collection materials valuable resources for their work. Book clubs, sororities and fraternities, cultural organizations, and other groups have also visited the collection.

For additional information about the Givens Collection, see http://special.lib.umn.edu/rare/givens/. Information about the Givens Foundation is available at http://www.givens.org.

Jane Goodall Institute's Center for Primate Studies at the University of Minnesota

ANNE PUSEY

In 1960, Jane Goodall began her studies of chimpanzees at Gombe Stream Reserve on the eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika, Tanzania—and one of the longest and most famous field studies of any mammal was under way. At that time almost nothing was known about the natural behavior of our closest living relatives. Within the first year of her study, Goodall discovered that chimpanzees fashioned and used tools, and not only ate meat but hunted for it. Her work during the 1960s revealed that chimpanzees have complex social relationships and personality differences equal to those of humans. Her discoveries drew worldwide attention and forced a redefinition of the distinctions between chimpanzees and humans.

During the 1970s her studies revealed the aggressive nature of intergroup and intragroup conflict, including primitive warfare and infanticide—the murder of infants from other groups by males and within-group infanticide by females. In the 1980s the birth of twins and the dramatic overthrow of an

alpha male were observed. The increasing habituation of a second community in the 1990s has allowed study of cultural differences in tool use between groups, and the possible transfer of a culture from one community to another by an immigrant female.

The study continues, and it is certain that there is much still to be discovered, both by future work and by analysis of long-term data. In 1967, Goodall wrote, "We have grown used to explaining that many of the most important and fascinating questions can be answered only if we keep up our records for the next ten to twenty years." These words are as true now as they were then. In order to understand as much as we can about this species so close to humans, and thus learn more about the roots of our own behavior, this study must continue for several more chimpanzee generations. It is also imperative that we preserve and analyze the data already collected. Knowledge from this work should help to preserve chimpanzees, but in the tragic event that this increasingly endangered species becomes extinct during the next century, this record will assume even greater importance for posterity.

Since the 1960s, daily data on chimpanzee behavior have been recorded by a research team of Tanzanians and expatriates. The data consist of field notes (some typed but most handwritten), check sheets, and maps as well as an extensive photographic record in stills, film, and videotape. The paper data now consist of more than a ton of notes, filling fifteen file cabinets. These data have recently been gathered from scattered locations around the world and, in 1995, established in a new home at the Jane Goodall Institute's Center for Primate Studies at the University of Minnesota.

Goodall and her associates have written numerous scientific and popular accounts of many aspects of chimpanzee behavior, but, because of the labor-intensive nature of hand tabulation and analysis, these have been based on only a small proportion of the data and have tended to concentrate on only a few of the two hundred individual chimpanzees that have been observed during the past forty-two years. We now have the opportunity to use modern techniques of data scanning and digitization to create a permanent and indestructible archive and to use computer analysis to access all the information to discover new patterns and trends currently hidden in the data.

Curation and analysis of the data in the collection are ongoing. Each page of notes or information is digitally scanned for preservation. Photographs are scanned at the College of Biological Sciences' Imaging Center and placed in a database. Videos are copied and logged. Systematic data are entered into a relational database for research. Current projects using the computerized data include a detailed examination of the factors influencing intercommunity aggression and territory size; the importance of dominance rank in determining male and female reproductive success; mechanisms of kin recognition and incest avoidance; the acquisition of tool-using skills by infants; factors involved in determining meat-sharing by males; factors influencing the length of the "working day" for different individuals; and the effects of long-term vegetational change on the behavior of chimpanzees in Gombe National Park.

The Humphrey Forum

STEVEN SANDELL

Hubert H. Humphrey left a trail across American politics. You could always tell where he had been. People loved to talk about him and the ideas he brought along. Like a familiar object held in your hand, Humphrey's thoughts about government and politics were easy to recognize. Their size, texture, and weight gave shape to twentieth-century liberalism.

Along the way, Humphrey collected the buttons and banners of politics. It was a fair trade for a politician who loved the give and take of a campaign. From his first campaign as a candidate for mayor of Minneapolis in 1943, until his last election to the U.S. Senate in 1976, Humphrey collected the material culture of American history and politics. Most of those items are now part of the Humphrey Forum's

collection. The museum owns more than ten thousand objects, eight thousand photographs, two hundred works of art, one hundred films and videotapes, and more than thirty linear feet of manuscripts. Each item offers evidence of Humphrey's life and his politics. Taken together they define a person whose character was based on broad interests, great energy, and intense ambition; whose work was nourished by debate, discussion, and legislative accomplishment; and whose philosophy included a passion for human rights, democratic government, and strong leadership on behalf of those who needed help.

Humphrey's name is on some of the most important legislation passed while he was in the Senate. The Forum owns more than twenty pens used by Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson to sign significant bills into law; these were then given to Humphrey, in recognition of his work on Medicare, the Peace Corps, Job Corps, Food for Peace, and civil rights legislation, as well as treaties agreeing to nuclear arms reduction.

When it came to choosing sides in an argument, Humphrey was partisan and liberal. Bumper stickers, campaign pins, banners, caps, and vests document his role in the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party. Videotape and film of DFL bean feeds show Humphrey speaking next to Orville Freeman, John Kennedy, Harry Truman, and Adlai Stevenson. Photographs record his meetings with Willie Brandt in Berlin, Pope Paul VI in the Vatican, and Charles DeGaulle in Paris, as well as with African children and with military personnel in Southeast Asia.

Elections and campaigns took Humphrey around Minnesota and across the country. Campaign items from nearly every state are in the collection—bumper stickers and banners, keys to more than three hundred cities, lapel pins, jewelry, brochures, position papers, itineraries, phone bills, and hotel expense records.

Humphrey was a midwesterner, and many of the drawings, needlepoint, macramé hangings, crocheted items, paintings, and folk art came to him from constituents in Minnesota and friends in North and South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska, Wisconsin, and Illinois. People sent him scrapbooks filled with newspaper clippings about his visit to their hometown.

These objects are a road map of local traditions and political dialect. The Ojibwe and Dakota gave him ceremonial pipes and headdress. Universities gave him graduation hoods and honorary degrees. Texans gave him broad-brimmed hats. Local Democratic organizations gave him donkeys—as stuffed toys, handblown glass ornaments, cuff links, and paperweights. Heads of state gave him their countries' best: crystal from West Germany, pearl from Korea, and carved ivory from Africa.

People wanted their gifts to sustain the memory of their visits and meetings with the mayor, senator, and vice president. Construction workers gave him hard hats, rabbis gave him yarmulkes, and farmers gave him their field-worn caps. The astronauts even gave Humphrey his own flight suit. Some sent him their wishes for a spiritual life and religious support: Bibles, the Torah, prayers of many languages and faiths, rosaries, pictures of Jesus, and stories of Muhammad were frequent gifts.

Not all of the record represents respect and admiration. Intense criticism is depicted in editorial cartoons, photographs of protests during the 1968 campaign, drawings by Lillie Spandorff from the Chicago convention, and videotape and newsreel of demonstrations against the vice president's support of the Johnson administration's policies in Southeast Asia.

Some of the most compelling items in the collection came to the Humphrey Forum from a Peace Corps school in Gabon in 2001. Jacob Hughes, who had taught with the Peace Corps in Gabon before attending the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, traveled to central Africa and arranged for two classroom desks and their benches, the classroom's chalkboard, student lists, and exam books to be exchanged for new equipment at the school, then shipped the furnishings and books to the Humphrey Forum.

The desks and classroom items represent the central themes of Humphrey's ideals. His idea for a "Freedom Corps" attracted President Kennedy's attention, and the resulting Peace Corps legislation ignited enthusiasm and optimism for government's ability to help people. The new initiative promoted literacy and an exchange of ideas, education and self-help, and a foreign policy based on goodwill and mutual respect.

Humphrey often talked about "the value and power of education—its value as an end in itself, its key role in the freeing of man's spirit and the enrichment of his life—and its power to shape the destinies of nations."

One of Humphrey's friends called him a "retail politician." Hubert would have chuckled at that. After all, that's where he learned his politics—at the counter of his dad's drugstore in Huron, South Dakota, talking with customers about farm prices, world affairs, and problems close to home. He never changed. Shaking hands, remembering names, visiting on the street corner as well as in front of the TV cameras on *Meet the Press,* Humphrey loved the give and take of politics.

The Humphrey Forum is like that: it's a storefront of ideas and history. The exhibits, storage, and space for our teaching and public programs are out in the open. Humphrey's politics are evident in the display of individual objects. The breadth of his interests and influence is clear when the collection is viewed as a whole. The excitement, drama, conflict, compromise, and hard work of government and politics are part of our teaching program for elementary and secondary schoolchildren, for college and university students, and in our programs for other adults.

The Goldstein Museum of Design

LINDSAY SHEN

The Goldstein Museum of Design is a museum of objects that reveal everyday life in all its richness, complexity, and strangeness. It is a museum that demonstrates the centrality of design to life past and present, public and private. Its collections show design not as the wallpaper of our lives but as an agent, capable of addressing the health of our communities, the well-being of our societies, and our individual quality of life.

A permanent collection devoted to something as prevalent as design is necessarily diverse to the point of seeming unfocused. The museum's twenty thousand accessions include a delicate mother-of-pearl calling card case, demonstrating the niceties of Victorian etiquette; a man's watch fob fashioned from the plaited human hair of a lost loved one, prompting contemplation on the entwining of the material and the spiritual in the preservation of memory; a boned corset from 1885 and a black strapless push-up brassiere from 1950, underscoring our preoccupation with the corporeal. Ostrich feather fans tell of flirtatious delight in avian display. A cup whose glaze is mixed from recycled agricultural by-products advocates responsible consumption of the earth's resources. A tea bowl made by a local potter conveys the quiet pleasure of a ritual as satisfying in private as in public. A delicately streaked "hare glaze" bowl made eight hundred years ago in China confirms the same. A poster promoting voting, commissioned by the American Institute of Graphic Arts, reminds us that our individual choices shape the public domain. All of the objects in the Goldstein—historic and contemporary, ethnically diverse—reveal design as a form of communication between the objects' makers, their audiences, and us.

The Goldstein had its beginnings in the work of two remarkable educators and art collectors, the sisters Harriet and Vetta Goldstein. Born in Michigan into a family recently emigrated from Poland, the Goldsteins assumed teaching positions at the University of Minnesota in 1910 and 1914, respectively. Their design philosophy, elucidated in their book *Art in Everyday Life* (1925), was rooted in the Arts and Crafts Movement and stressed the interrelationships between aesthetics and lifestyle: "As we surround ourselves with beauty, art actually becomes a part of our life and personality." Believing in the centrality of the art object to the teaching of design principles, the sisters began to assemble the core of what has become an impressive design collection. Prescient connoisseurs, Harriet and Vetta Goldstein acquired premier examples of early modernist design, including ceramics by the Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis, Tiffany metalwork, and Rookwood pottery. An interest in Native American art led to the acquisition of Pueblo pottery and Navajo rugs and blankets. Later, in their global travels they procured items such as exquisite Turkish hand-embroideries, Kashmir shawls, and Indonesian batik.

The Goldsteins retired in 1949, but their philosophy that designed objects are integral to the learning experience was shared and continued by colleagues and college administrations, leading to the establishment of the Goldstein Gallery in 1976 in the newly renovated McNeal Hall in St. Paul. Since then, the museum has focused its mission on supporting teaching and research on campus. As part of a land grant institution, it also fulfills a vital public outreach function through exhibitions, publications, off-site programs, and community partnerships.

As the needs of its constituents have changed, the museum has developed its collections in areas for which it has become nationally known. An important gift in 1976 from the Minneapolis/St. Paul chapter of the Fashion Group International marked the start of a premier designer fashion collection. Now that collection contains the work of internationally prominent designers, such as early couturier Charles Frederick Worth; Elsa Schiaparelli, who combined fashion with surrealism; Coco Chanel, known for her classically enduring women's sportswear; Christian Dior, creator of the postwar "New Look"; Issey Miyake, whose astounding technological innovations help keep Japan at the forefront of world fashion; and Geoffrey Beene, master of surface manipulation. Complementing the designer fashion holdings is an important collection of historic dress, dating from the mid-eighteenth century. As a whole, these collections tell us much about the values and aspirations we communicate through clothing choices. They speak of the rituals and mores of our own and other societies. They reveal the images we hold of our bodies and how we wish these images to be perceived by others.

The Goldstein's collections are not used just for sociological and anthropological purposes. In keeping with Harriet and Vetta's principles, these collections have always been inspiration for design. As was the case with many of the earliest design museums, the Goldstein is a training ground for future designers. Its extensive textile collections, for example, provide students with the opportunity to study techniques such as block printing, batik, tie-dye, quilting, beading, silk painting, and hand and machine embroidery. In 1998 the Goldstein, along with The Minneapolis Institute of Arts and the University of Minnesota's Manuscripts Division, received the remarkable gift of the design archive of Jack Lenor Larsen, one of America's premier designers of textiles for interiors. This material allows students an insight into the complexity of the design process on the industrial level and an appreciation for the possibility of a symbiotic relationship between fine art and technological innovation in textile production.

The museum's decorative arts and furniture collections have been largely chosen for what these objects can tell us about technique. They include a tubular steel chair by modernist architect and designer Mies van der Rohe, birch laminated plywood chairs by Finnish designer Alvar Aalto, Charles Eames's molded ash plywood screen, and Frank Gehry's playful contemporary experiments with bentwood construction. Items from the decorative arts collections demonstrate techniques for working silver; the alchemy achieved through experimentation with glazes for ceramics; and the resourceful use of local plant materials in Finnish, Native American, Korean, and African basketry. A recently acquired bowl by Louise Rauh, a metalworker from Iowa, achieves a tension between strength and fragility through the medium of etched aluminum.

Minneapolis and St. Paul have in recent decades become a vibrant and internationally recognized center for graphic design and advertising, and graphic design has become the fastest growing program within the Department of Design, Housing, and Apparel at the university. In recognition of the needs of these students and the profession, the Goldstein has begun a graphic design collection. Its first acquisition was a complete archived set of all issues of *Emigre,* a progressive graphic design publication that for seventeen years has been committed to stimulating discourse on design. Its Fall 2000 issue, "The Emigre Legacy," constituted an appeal for the environmentally responsible production and consumption of designed materials. Through its collections the Goldstein hopes to inspire discourses such as this—questions about the centrality of design to our societies and about its role as an agent for positive change.

Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections, Bell Museum of Natural History

ANDREW SIMONS

The Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections of the Bell Museum of Natural History were created and developed by various curators since the late nineteenth century. They contain excellent representation of Minnesota fauna but also include specimens from all over the world; these holdings reflect not only the Minnesota location of the Bell Museum but also the research interests of curators who built them. They are liquid collections, with most of the specimens preserved in either isopropyl or ethyl alcohol. Ethyl alcohol is a particularly good preservative, and with proper care biological specimens stored in alcohol can last for hundreds of years. Alcohol is flammable, requiring that the collections be stored in a fireproof and explosion-proof facility on the St. Paul campus of the university.

The oldest specimens were collected by Ulysses Cox and Henry Nachtrieb in the late nineteenth century. Cox was a professor of biology at State Normal School in Mankato, Minnesota, and an early expert on North American cavefishes. Some of his cavefish specimens are maintained in the Bell collections. Nachtrieb was the Minnesota state zoologist from 1890 to 1903, when he began the first systematic survey of Minnesota fishes. He deposited some of the earliest surveys of Minnesota fish fauna in this collection, which was then called the Minnesota Museum of Natural History. Nachtrieb apparently was concerned with evaporation of alcohol from specimen jars (a problem that still persists for curators of alcohol-preserved collections). He experimented with a system of permanently sealing specimens in glass tubes. While this has the advantage of preventing evaporation of preservative, the specimens are difficult, if not impossible, to use for scientific studies, and the results of his endeavors are interesting and aesthetically pleasing relics of past curatorial techniques. The collections contain Nachtrieb's experiments with several specimens of cavefish, eel, lamprey, and gar, individually sealed in long glass tubes. All of these specimens, sealed in the late 1890s, appear in excellent condition today.

Nachtrieb was succeeded by Thomas S. Roberts, Thaddeus Surber, Samuel Eddy, and James Underhill. These individuals, their students, and colleagues were responsible for building the collections from the 1930s to the present. The Bell Museum has the foremost collection of Upper Midwest fishes and is an invaluable resource for research on the history of the Minnesota ichthyofauna. The collection also houses several specimens from outside Minnesota, including specimens from the Menage Expedition to the Philippines in the 1890s; specimens from Hawaii collected in the early 1900s; and many specimens from the continental United States. The Fish Collection contains diverse holdings of marine fishes from the Pacific Northwest, Gulf of Mexico, and the Atlantic coast. Many of the taxa represented in these earlier collections are now rare or endangered.

The Fish Collection currently contains more than 38,800 catalogued lots. Each lot represents all members of a species collection at a particular place and time; thus, the number of specimens per lot is variable. We do not know how many individual fish specimens are present in the Bell collections, although the total is probably more than 300,000. When the holdings of the collections are recorded electronically by computer, we will be able to determine the precise number of specimens. The Fish Collection has six paratypes, name-bearing specimens designated when the species was described. This includes paratypes of the Devil's Hole pupfish *(Cyprinodon diabolis)*, which has the smallest range of any known vertebrate. The entire species is restricted to an 18-square-meter limestone ledge in a single spring in Nevada. In addition to the liquid collection, there is a large collection of pharyngeal teeth from carps, minnows, and suckers; a substantial uncatalogued larval fish collection; and a growing collection of dry and stained-and-cleared skeletal material. With recent interest in molecular data in systematic research, frozen tissues are also being collected. These are stored in large chest freezers at

–70° C. These fish tissues from Minnesota and the southeastern United States are a valuable complement to the alcohol collection.

The Amphibian and Reptile Collections are smaller than the Fish Collection and comprise approximately 15,000 specimens. These collections were started by Professor Walter Breckenridge, who was best known for his work on birds. The Amphibian and Reptile Collections focus on the fauna of the Upper Midwest and are the best collections for this region. An extensive collection of leopard frogs from several localities was gathered by David Merrell and Robert McKinnell in the 1960s. This frog collection is noteworthy because of the large number of specimens in each lot, something unusual for herpetological collections. The frogs from this collection continue to be examined by researchers interested in the history of frog deformities in the Upper Midwest.

The Amphibian and Reptile Collections include significant collections from Mexico (more than 640 specimens) as well as smaller collections from Oceania. Current accessions to the Amphibian and Reptile Collections are largely from survey work conducted by the Minnesota County Biological Survey. The Fish, Amphibian, and Reptile Collections at the Bell Museum are used by researchers within Minnesota and across the country. There are many requests for information from the database, but actual specimens are also sent on loan. Specimens are loaned for periods of up to one year, and permission is often granted to dissect or sample the specimen in a destructive fashion. Destructive sampling allows researchers to determine fecundity, dietary preferences, or other information. Specimens are also loaned for educational or display purposes.

The Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

JEAN-NICKOLAUS TRETTER

Few people have special library collections named after them during their lifetime. Even fewer people can build and shape these collections after donation. I am one such individual. I helped to install and now manage the Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies in the University of Minnesota's Department of Special Collections and Rare Books. As a curator of *Cabinet of Curiosities*, I used this collection, as did the other student curators.

The collection began in 1984, when I was working on a historical exhibit for our local GLBT Pride Committee. As I gathered materials, I found that many of the items I wanted to display no longer existed. No one had attempted to document and preserve GLBT history. Previously, I had maintained a small private library of GLBT books and periodicals for my own use. Finding no institution or person willing then to devote time and energy to preserving the ephemera of the GLBT community, and as a collector born into a family of collectors, I set out on my quest. I did not know where the materials would go and did not have any specific goal other than to preserve all that I could before a unique culture disappeared from the memory of humankind.

As the collection grew over the ensuing years, so did its reputation for having research materials not found anywhere else, and I began to receive calls from college students and reporters looking for information. From my own personal research of GLBT culture and history, I had learned that no item was unimportant and that each had a story to tell. Therefore I did not set any boundary to my collecting other than personal limits of finances and space. My own interests led the collection more to historical and Gay male items, but, if something did not cost too much or seemed particularly important historically, I would make every effort to acquire it. I would scour antique fairs for Lesbian porcelains from the 1950s, and I traded duplicate buttons from Transgender events held around the world for others. I enjoyed reviewing antiquities catalogues, looking for ancient artifacts from Greece, Rome, and Egypt; these were often

inexpensive because other collectors did not want items that could be too closely associated with GLBT people. Anything and everything was grist for the mill. I would even steal menus from Gay restaurants and urge friends to bring me back newspapers and pamphlets from their travels.

Eventually, I decided that, upon my death, the collection would be transferred to the Kepner Library and Archives in southern California. Jim Kepner had been a close friend of mine and my mentor regarding GLBT libraries, archives, and museums, which I learned from him existed worldwide. Jim had begun collecting in 1943 and had founded the international GLBT Archives that eventually combined with the One Institute and together found a home at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. After Jim passed away in 1998, One Institute graciously named its library and archive after him.

A strange confluence of events happened that changed all of that and led to my donating the collection to the University of Minnesota. First, I was seriously injured, and doctors told me I would never be able to return to my former job. The loss of income did not bode well, for my collection had been privately financed by me with occasional help from friends who shared my beliefs. Then, in 1997, the University of Minnesota received a grant of $500,000 to establish the Steven J. Schochet Center for GLBT Studies, and the new Elmer L. Andersen Library became a center in 1999 for a host of university collections and archives. Susan Raffo, at that time the assistant director of the GLBT Program office at the university, had used my collection for her own research and suggested to Beth Zemsky, director of GLBT Programs, that the Schochet Center needed a library and archive collection for research purposes. Knowing the extent of the Tretter Collection, they approached me about donating it to the University of Minnesota.

That offer was very attractive. During my first fifteen years of collecting, I continually moved into larger and larger apartments just to ensure appropriate housing for the collection. Suddenly, I faced the prospect of no job and had no income to provide for the care, maintenance, and storage of the collection. At this point I was presented with the idea of donating the collection, which I agreed to do if we could write an appropriate contractual agreement. The contract took two years to finalize and was signed in May 2000. My rooms full of books, magazines, journals, artworks, textiles, and ephemera of GLBT cultures could now become an important research center at the University of Minnesota and be catalogued and cared for regardless of my own condition.

Mark Dion: Cabinet of Curiosities started in the fall of 2000. One of the benefits of that class was the opportunity to visit various university collections. The Tretter Collection would not begin transfer to the university until January 2001, so the class visited my two-bedroom apartment to see the collection. This experience revealed what happens to excessive compulsive collectors regardless of how noble their intentions. We had problems finding places for everyone to sit, because the entire apartment was stacked from floor to ceiling with boxes of files and artifacts. Bookshelves lined the walls. Even some of the furniture was part of the collection. A computer desk was the only functional piece of furniture and existed to keep track of the collection on the database. The class seemed to enjoy the excursion and the ability to see a collection before its official installation at the university.

The Tretter Collection is now a part of the University of Minnesota Library system and is available in the Elmer L. Andersen Library on the West Bank of the Twin Cities campus. As part of the Department of Special Collections and Rare Books, the Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies is undergoing cataloguing, a process that will continue for several years because of the large size of the collection. Eventually it will be fully integrated into the university's library system, with titles accessible through its computer-based card catalogue.

The Tretter Collection is a library, archive, and museum. It currently consists of more than thirty thousand items in a variety of media. The collection is international and includes materials in approximately fifty-six languages. It covers all periods (the oldest item is a 4,000-year-old phallic statuette from Egypt) and runs up to present-day editions of GLBT periodicals. Books form the core of the collection, although other substantial sections include textiles, glassware, film, music, artworks in many media, and

three-dimensional objects, such as furniture and event buttons. The personal papers of GLBT people, such as the anthropologist Tobias Schneebaum and Professor Stuart Ferguson of Newcastle, Australia, have been added, along with new unpublished manuscripts, vertical files, and periodicals from all over the world. In addition to its value for research, the collection is used for exhibitions, such as *Cabinet of Curiosities,* traveling historical exhibits for Pride festivals, and our permanent display case in the Elmer L. Andersen Library. It continues to grow and increase in vitality. The Tretter Collection serves the purpose and intent of its origins to preserve and inform the world of the history and culture of GLBT peoples.

Ornithological Collection, Bell Museum of Natural History

ROBERT M. ZINK

The University of Minnesota Bird Collection has its roots in the 1870s, when its future director, Thomas S. Roberts, began collecting birds as a teenager living in Minneapolis. Since 1940, when the Bell family provided funds for a building on the Minneapolis campus of the university, the collection has been part of the James Ford Bell Museum of Natural History, and by 2002 the collection had grown to 46,000 specimens. Contributions to the collection have come from many quarters. University of Minnesota ornithologists often collect specimens for research that are deposited as "vouchers" (evidence or proof) in the museum. Members of the public find dead birds, which they turn in to the museum (it is illegal for citizens to permanently possess most birds). The Minnesota state legislature designated the university museum to be the repository for bird specimens in Minnesota.

Most of the specimens are "scientific study skins": bird skins with attached feathers that have been stuffed with cotton. They are unlike taxidermied mounts—birds stuffed in lifelike poses that are for public display rather than scientific studies. Each bird skin is labeled with the date and place of collection as well as other pertinent information (sex, age, weight, stomach contents, fat level, reproductive condition, molt condition). The approximately 43,000 study skins represent 25 taxonomic orders, 143 families, 860 genera, and 1,700 species. Although the study skins come from around the world, the collection is best represented by skins from the Upper Midwest, southwestern United States, and Mexico. Some smaller but extremely valuable collections that are part of the museum include those from the Philippines and Borneo (Menage Expedition of 1890s), New Caledonia (from Dr. Dwain Warner during World War II), and hybrid series of flickers, orioles, and grosbeaks from the North American Great Plains. Many unique specimens are in the collection, including extinct or rare birds: Jackass Penguin, Greater Rhea, Short-tailed Albatross, Little Egret, American Flamingo, Red-breasted Goose, West Indian Whistling Duck, Monkey-eating Eagle, Everglade Kite, Great Curassow, Great Argus Pheasant, Crowned Crane, Whooping Crane, Eskimo Curlew, Passenger Pigeon, Cuban Parrot, Horned Parakeet, Carolina Parakeet, Resplendent Quetzal, and Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

The collection includes about 3,400 skeletons consisting of the bones of a bird. Sometimes these are only partial skeletons if a study skin was preserved from the same individual. These specimens represent 23 taxonomic orders, 75 families, 410 genera, and 550 species. The best geographic representation is the Upper Midwest. Unique specimens include incomplete skeletons of extinct moas (from New Zealand) and great auks.

The collection also includes three thousand sets of eggs, many with nests. There is an excellent series of passenger pigeon eggs. The first recorded eggs were a set of seven loggerhead shrike eggs collected with parent birds in Minneapolis on May 9, 1881.

A relatively new addition to the Bird Collection is a series of frozen tissue samples taken from specimens that are prepared either as study skins or skeletons. Approximately three thousand specimens of

several hundred species are stored in an "ultracold" (–80°C) freezer. They provide a source of DNA used to study everything from paternity to deep evolutionary relationships to conservation.

Our collection exists primarily for scientific research. Scientists at the University of Minnesota or from elsewhere might study geographic variation (how a species varies throughout its range), evolutionary relationships, distribution, migration times, food habits, and habitat uses as well as DNA studies. Persons who collect birds must have proper authorization from federal and state permitting agencies. The collection is also used for teaching; although a separate teaching collection exists, it is often supplemented by specimens from the research collection. Access to the collection is available to qualified scientists or those on a prearranged tour.

Specimens are like irreplaceable rare books in a library. They constitute the only permanent records of our biodiversity. They document when and where a species occurred, the sex and age of the individual, what it was eating, its appearance, and so on. Specimens can be examined and reexamined to verify the conclusions made by scientists. They are irreplaceable records of our natural heritage. New uses of specimens come along as new technologies are invented—for example, it is now routine to recover DNA (the material of heredity) from bits of dried skin from old study skins. Only the future will reveal what new uses our current specimens will serve.

This page intentionally left blank

Colleen J. Sheehy is director of education at the Weisman Art Museum and associate faculty in American studies and art history at the University of Minnesota. She has organized more than twenty exhibitions there, including Mark Dion: Cabinet of Curiosities, and has published and curated exhibitions on American art, American landscapes, and the visual culture of pop music. She is editor of Theatre of Wonder: Twenty-five Years in the Heart of the Beast (Minnesota, 1999).