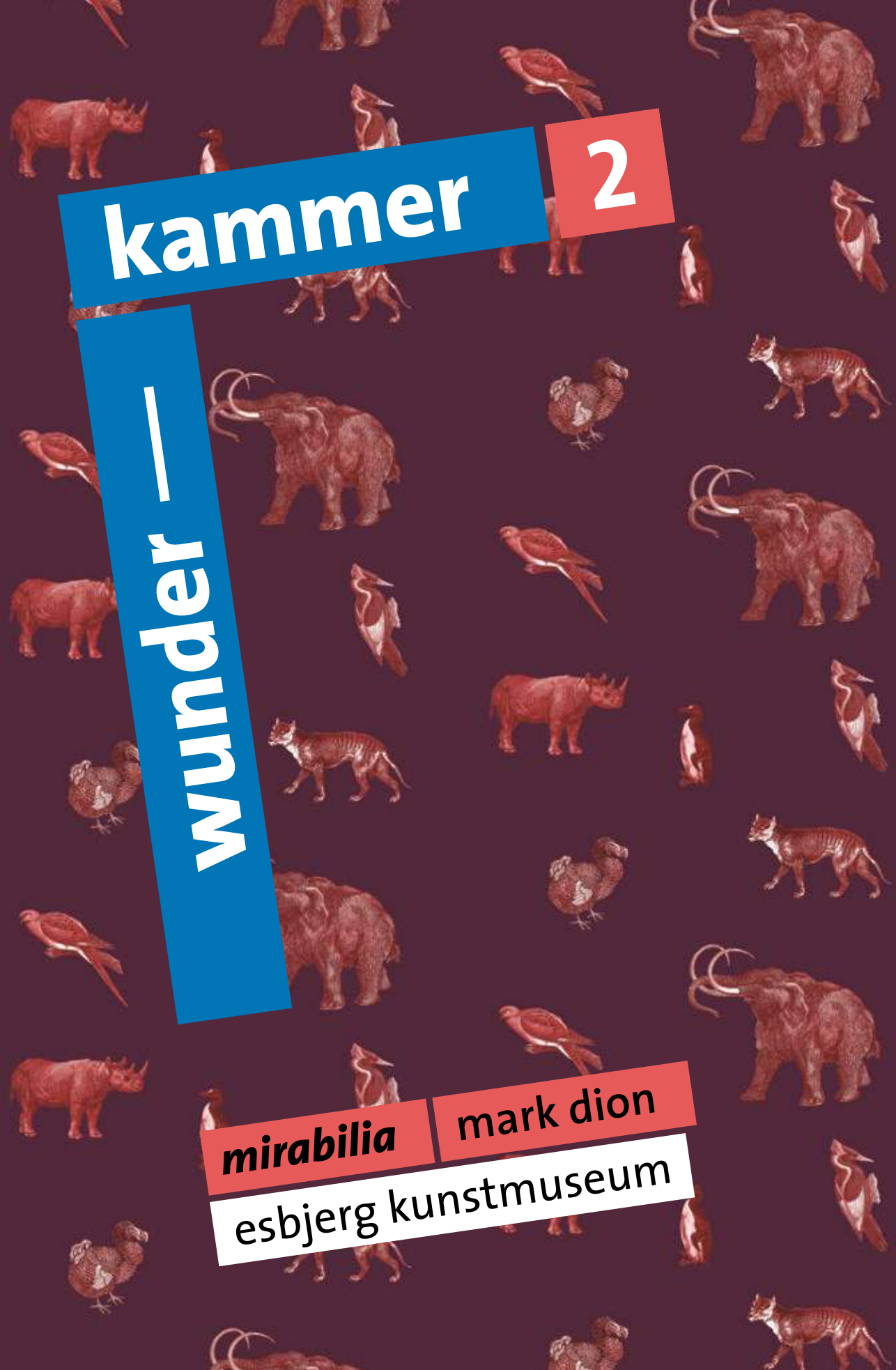


The background of the entire image is a dark reddish-brown color, covered with a repeating pattern of various prehistoric animals. These include mammoths, rhinoceroses, birds (possibly penguins or small flightless birds), and small mammals. The animals are rendered in a reddish-brown color that matches the background, creating a subtle, textured effect.

kammer

2

wunder —

mirabilia

mark dion

esbjerg kunstmuseum



2	wunderkammer 2 — an introduction
5	dialogue with mark dion
12	wunderkammer 2 — en introduktion (DK)
15	i dialog med mark dion (DK)
21	illustrations
66	list of works
69	cv

This booklet introduces the second exhibition of Esbjerg Art Museum's three-year wunderkammer project, *Wunderkammer 2 – mirabilia**, curated by Christiane Finsen and Inge Merete Kjeldgaard in close cooperation with the American artist Mark Dion.

The booklet commences with a short introduction to the exhibition, to the concept of the wunderkammer series, and to Mark Dion, whose artistic practice embodies elements from the wunderkammer.

The introduction is followed by a dialogue between the museum curators and the artist on their reflections on the wunderkammer as a present-day format, about museum exhibition formats in general, and about the museum as an institution as well as the role of art in society.

The booklet finishes off with a list of works and Mark Dion's CV.

Upon the conclusion of the wunderkammer exhibition series, Esbjerg Art Museum will be publishing an illustrated book that brings together the entire project and contains exhibition analyses as well as results from the research project on audience experiences.

* mirabilia (plural). Things which inspire wonder; miraculous events. [Lexico.com]

Inge Merete Kjeldgaard, director, and Christiane Finsen, curator at Esbjerg Kunstmuseum

How may a museum offer its visitors art experiences that engage them at a personal level? How can you increase the museum goers' experience of a direct relation between visual art and their life and the world around them? Through Mark Dion's solo exhibition, *Mirabilia*, we attempt to answer such questions, by challenging the format of the traditional art museum exhibition.

Thus you should not expect a standard solo exhibition. Rather, we seek to establish a sort of room of wonder, in which Mark Dion's works are installed in a dark and obscure, labyrinthian architecture, making up a total installation that teases our curiosity, appeals directly to our senses and our never-ending search for new insights. The exhibition may well consist of individual works, but they are integrated into a flow that leads us into a universe, surprisingly well known and completely unreal at the same time.

Your first step is into a seemingly home-like room with panels and patterned wallpaper, an old bookcase on the far wall, filled with curious objects in surprising juxtapositions. Here, in a paradoxical way, there is a unification of irrational and rational, personified by top shelf busts of the poet Edgar Allan Poe and the philosopher Voltaire. However, at closer inspection, the homely atmosphere changes into a disquieting parallel world, accentuated by the wallpaper pattern of extinct animals in a kind of apocalyptic vision, retraceable with morbid humour in several of the exhibition works, e.g. *The Fisheries*, in which examples of threatened fish species hang lifeless, heads down in a gallows-like construction.

Going on from there you will encounter the work *Sealife*, which bears resemblance to an archetypical scientific collection of various specimens in large glass jars. However, what is mimed here is not any existing order or standard taxonomic principles. What at first glance resembles exotic sea anemones and other odd sea creatures, turns out to be dog and sex toys that seem to glow disturbingly unnaturally in all the colours of the spectrum. The work initiates contemplation concerning both (un)spoilt nature and the value of our attempts at classifying the world despite all of its diversity and dynamic change.

But Dion's works are not just eyeopeners to the way in which we (ab)use nature. They are also capable of letting us see what is beautiful and wondrous about completely commonplace and apparently banal everyday objects. This is true about e.g. *An Archaeology of Lost Objects*, in which objects thrown away or lost achieve new meaning as well as museum value, or *Memory Box*, where piled together boxes and cans, filled with old trifles that were once useful, now evokes memories and, like a recollection generator, make us develop our own internal pictures. Through his works, Dion challenges

common hierarchies and prevalent norms for how we collect, categorize, and present art and other objects. His artistic practice thus reaches far beyond his individual works, as they always and already hold relations to the contexts they are exhibited in or play a part in, while at the same time they pose basic questions on the organization of modern museums. And in a wider perspective, questions concerning how dominant ideologies and society's institutions shape our understanding of history and nature, i.e., our knowledge of the world.

Mark Dion consciously challenges the otherwise firmly established distinction between what is objective and rational on the one hand and what is subjective and irrational on the other. His spectacular installations are often modelled on the wunderkammers of the 1500s and 1600s which in a historical perspective are regarded as the forerunners of our present-day museums. At that time, the wunderkammer constituted an encyclopedic collection of naturalia and ingenious objects, scientific instruments, ethnographica, art, and curiosities, not yet categorized in accordance with those scientific dividing lines that were defined later. However, instead of nature's elements and actual samples, in Dion's wunderkammer we are presented with human renderings and our perceptions of them. In this fashion we are confronted with our own view of the world. In his artistic universe, ultimately viewed as suspended between life and death, our feelings of wonder are evoked anew, while at the same time, our fear of and desire for looking into the future become more real – albeit with a humoristic twist.

Mirabilia is the second wunderkammer exhibition in a series of three, for which Esbjerg Art Museum received *The Vision Exhibition Award* in 2017. With the award, The Bikuben Foundation honours a visionary concept capable of 'reinventing exhibition formats to let art take centre stage'; formats which the award lets the winning institution realize. Our three present-day wunderkammers are developed using as their starting point the scientific world perspective, as seen by a physicist, an artist (Mark Dion), and a biologist. The first exhibition, *Wunderkammer 1 – fluid form* (2018), was conceived through extensive cooperation with Tomas Bohr, who is professor of Physics at Denmark's Technical University, and his team, while the third exhibition (2020) is curated in a partnership with the DNA researchers professor Eske Willerslev and associate professor Martin Sikora from the Centre for GeoGenetics at The University of Copenhagen. When we are not simply using visual art as our starting point, which might be expected from an art museum, but turn to biology and physics, it is because we want to incorporate areas that deal with the most basic and fundamental elements of human existence. While biology focuses on exploring life itself and the life functions, physics concentrates on matter and energy in the nature that surrounds us. It is here, in a domain of eternal wonderment and search for connections and meaningfulness, that art and natural sciences meet and complement each other. Both seek to expand our views of the world, and both approach, from different angles, the mysteries of existence.

Mark Dion cooperates with natural scientists as well as humanists, but in the project at hand, this renowned artist for the first time takes part in a series of exhibitions that covers many different angles of both experimentative and research-oriented approaches to the wunderkammer concept with which he has worked extensively since the 1990s.

With this cooperative project we hope to be able to open the doors to that personal chamber of wonders with which we are all born, by combining our individual experience sphere with the singularly wonderful world that surrounds us all. We would like to extend our most heartfelt thanks to Mark Dion for his enthusiasm and commitment

to this rather complicated and experimentative project. The work with the project has been extremely stimulating and characterized by cooperativeness and positive professional development.

Furthermore, we would like to thank the artist's assistant Nathan Catlin, and Guillaume Blanc, who produced the wallpapers. For lending us works, we thank Sammlung Liebelt, Galerie Nagel Draxler, Galerie In Situ, and Waldburger Wouters, and for kind assistance, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery and Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane. Finally, a warm thank you to The Bikuben Foundation and its jury for choosing to award our exhibition concept with such a distinguished recognition, and to The Augustinus Foundation for further support for the project.

dialogue with mark dion

Inge Merete Kjeldgaard, director, and Christiane Finsen, curator at Esbjerg Kunstmuseum

IMK and CMF: *First of all, we would like to thank you for accepting the invitation to partake in our Wunderkammer project, for which we have received The Vision Exhibition Award from The Bikuben Foundation. We are very grateful and proud that you are contributing to this project. But what made you accept?*

MD: There were a number of factors which attracted me to the project. Of course I have been working with the concept of the Wunderkammer since the early 1990's. My original interest evolved from my investigation into the natural history museum as a site of knowledge production on the topic of nature itself. I was keen to search ever deeper into the history of museums and as I pulled this red thread, I eventually arrived at pre-Enlightenment collections. Since then the aesthetics of Wunderkammern have become essential to my practice.

Because of Ole Worm's *Musei Wormiani Historia*, the frontispiece from the Museum Wormianum depicting Ole Worm's cabinet of curiosities, Denmark has a very special place in the history of wonder rooms. So I imagine that the concept has a deep and positive resonance with the Danish public. I also am close with artist Rosamond Purcell (kind of a big hero to me), who made the remarkable reconstruction of Worm's space.

Another reason was the powerful and unmistakable enthusiasm the two of you had in contacting me. I am, perhaps above all things, an enthusiast. It is a trait I recognize and admire in others. It seemed pretty obvious from our first contact that you were both going to be a lot of fun to work with. I don't have a huge amount of fun in my life so I am always eager to maximize fun when possible.

IMK and CMF: *Is it possible at all to work at a museum without enthusiasm? To us it is exactly this kind of energy that has generated a project like the Wunderkammer. But at the same time, what occupies us a lot is how to provoke a similar kind of enthusiasm in the visitors. Do you think that the wunderkammer in particular can augment a personal engagement like that?*

MD: I think of the wunderkammer concept or tradition as an important way of moving museum aesthetics and strategies forward by looking back. The cabinet of wonder represents the road not taken by museums in the Enlightenment, which strove to find universal systems of display based on science. The success of this model resulted in the materialization of museum display and organization that would be identical if one was in Milan, Edinburgh, Cairo, or Helsinki. The taxonomy of Linnaeus became the standard of organization in Natural History Museums, until the middle of the 20th century. In Art Museums, organization taxonomies solidified around chronology, styles, materials, nationalities, and a conventional narrative of modern progress.

In the Wunderkammer or Kunstkammer these disciplinary categories tend to be mixed together – the collections are radically heterogeneous to our ordered eye. A dried sea creature, next to a painting, adjacent to an ostrich egg in an elaborate silver setting – this seems very evocative and not strictly didactic in a conventional way. The gathering of objects and their juxtaposition is far more puzzling, delightful, challenging, which gives the viewer more work to do, rather than to merely be a passive consumer of information. In this manner, as you suggest, the museum visitor is more deeply engaged in teasing out meaning and producing knowledge.

One of the things which I find most intriguing about the European Early Modern phenomena of the cabinet of wonder is that it is not really one thing. Rather, these collections are idiosyncratic, built not around the same principle but organized in very different ways. Some may be arranged in a manner cosmological, some allegorical, some magical or theological and others proto-scientific. Certainly they are all expressions of power, implicated in a larger context of pernicious colonial endeavor, but how they signify and what their goals may be is far from universal, and to a large extent, is still not entirely clear. Still, I think as an artist and sometimes curator I can learn a great deal from looking at Wunderkammern and employing aspects of their structural methodology and aesthetics.

IMK and CMF: *Your answer comprises several interesting considerations that we want to return to in this conversation. Let us begin with your own artistic practice. Could you go deeper into how you use the wunderkammer concept specifically in your own way of working? How would you describe the relationship between the wunderkammer as form and as content in your work?*

MD: When I think of the wunderkammer or cabinet of wonder concept, I am thinking of something very specific – European collections from the 16th and 17th century which I know from contemporary Renaissance historians, who I have read, seen at conferences or have a productive dialogue with. I don't see the wunderkammer as a catch-all phrase that encompasses all eccentric or idiosyncratic collections. To me the concept is disciplined and very specific to its historical moment. While my own displays and sculptures may replicate aspects of wunderkammer sensibility, like heterogeneous display methodologies, and while I make specific reference to the tradition and its discursive sensibility, I don't think I am making a wunderkammer. I am not re-enacting a pre-Enlightenment collection.

Rather, what I am doing is producing a new way of talking and thinking about the origins of European collections using materials, display furniture and techniques of installation art, rather than simply texts and images as a historian might do. So the concept of the wunderkammer may be both the form and the content of particular works. Some works are intentionally examinations of Renaissance collections but from a post-colonial perspective.

I was speaking with Paula Findlen, who is a remarkable scholar of early modern collections and their context, and we both agreed that what is so exciting about looking at this historical phenomenon is that there still remains so much unknown and perhaps unknowable about Wunderkammern and the cultural landscape which allowed them to flourish. For the scholars and artists who are excited by this stuff, there is an incredible bond of enthusiasm and passion. Sometimes it is hard for us to remember that not everyone feels as stoked by this material as we do.

IMK and CMF: *Earlier in this conversation you mentioned how the wunderkammer has the potential to move the museum as an institution forward by looking back. And when we*

talk about the wunderkammer we have no intentions of neither mimicking the content on a superficial level, nor do we see any perspective in using it as merely a scenographic setting. Therefore, we agree with you when you renounce any superficial re-enactment of the past. Instead our project is about rethinking the wunderkammer as a phenomenon in a contemporary context; and what interests us in this respect is especially three features, characteristic of the historical wunderkammer: a fundamental curiosity about the phenomena of the world as well as the connections between them; a heterogeneous presentation format which may contribute to our modern day exhibition elements of variation, astonishment, and unpredictability; and finally, an encyclopedic dimension that breaks down the borders between the definitions of long-established subjects and disciplines, thereby uniting these world views.

How would you describe the role of these features in your way of working? And in continuation of that, why is it – in your opinion – important to produce a new way of talking and thinking about the origins and presentation of European collections in our age, as you emphasize?

MD: I find the three traits of the wunderkammer tradition you have teased out helpful in distinguishing the cabinet of wonder from later Enlightenment systems of display and organization. In your first distinction (a fundamental curiosity about the phenomena of the world as well as the connections between them), I think we could also claim that approach for the Enlightenment, but it seems to me the place of magic and the supernatural is much stronger in the Wunderkammer. In essence I believe that the organizers and collectors of the Renaissance were striving to discover the secret language of the divine creator encoded in nature. The objects gathered had magical properties which were very real to the collectors, but they also had symbolic functions. Of course Enlightenment and 19th century scientists were also involved in a kind of natural theology, in which the study of nature was a devotional act, but I think the place of magic is one of the things which distinguished the Wunderkammer from later cultures of collecting. I am always interested in focusing on what makes the cabinet of wonder different from the museum, rather than merely seeing it as an early evolutionary stage in the development of museums.

I am not a person who believes in magic, but as an artist rather than a scientist, I understand the usefulness and power of symbolic language. This may be the reason that artists are so drawn to the images of the Wunderkammer and why the surrealists were so compelled by the notion of the cabinet of curiosities.

Your second distinction, of a heterogeneous presentation format, is also an important distinction against the taxonomic rigors of later museum presentations. What is interesting in the early modern collection tradition is that the mode of the heterogeneous presentation may be present in the objects themselves. A Kunstkammer object may mix a curiosity of nature – nautilus shell, bezoar, red coral, rhinoceros horn – with artful gold or silver work and even imbue it with a complex function. These objects also may have pragmatic magical functions like protection or divination.

Lastly, your description of breaking down disciplinary borders, I think perhaps speaks to the cosmological impulse in the Wunderkammer. They are microcosmic reconstructions of the world, organized around complex allegorical structures like the elements, the seasons, the humors, etc. Perhaps they are encyclopedias of objects, and the collectors themselves (who are always present) are the texts. If you look at the early images of the Wunderkammer, very often you will find men in discussion, pointing at things. These spaces were lively locations of debate and discourse. The visitor viewers and the collector organizers were in constant dialogue and the objects were perhaps subject to exchange.

When exhibiting Wunderkammer and Kunstkammer artifacts, museums seem to mostly take on two exhibition strategies – some attempt at a reconstruction of the original context, like Grünes Gewölbe in Dresden, others turn the exhibition into a jewelry store-like space, highlighting the exquisite objects, as in the Kunstkammer at the Vienna Kunsthistorisches Museum. Given the choice of the two, I much more prefer the Grünes Gewölbe approach which allows viewers to understand the place of the objects in the context of the princely court and the treasure art chamber.

IMK and CMF: *You talk about the Wunderkammer as a microcosm and an encyclopedia of objects; and you also mention how the collectors and the wunderkammer visitors exchanged their ways of picturing the world when looking at those objects together. Could one say that you as an artist through your work are continuing this constant dialogue and exchange at a symbolic level, from a contemporary perspective? And if so, could you please give us some examples, telling us about the ideas behind some of your works in the exhibition?*

MD: In general my work follows two or three roads which intersect and sometimes run parallel. The first, the one I have traveled the longest, deals with biodiversity, extinction, and issues of environmental degradation. These works are born out of anger and frustration and making art is my way of dealing with the onslaught of deeply depressing news about our suicidal relationship to the natural world. In some sense the historical moment of the Wunderkammer expresses a sense of exuberant wonder at the discovery of new plants, animals, people and places, encountered by Europeans in the early colonial period. I see this as bookended by our melancholic perspective today as we mourn the disappearance of the very things we wondered at (corals, large animals, exotic birds, etc.). All of which of course disappearing due to the colonialism, capitalism and industrial revolution we introduced world wide. So works like *The Fisheries*, *The Old Crow*, *Sea Life* and *Rhinoceros Horn* are exactly responding to these concerns.

Another road I travel is the history of museums and history of natural history. This road I arrived at by trying to understand the conceptual underpinning and epistemology of our ecology crisis which seems to be rooted in the history of ideas. This is the road that leads through the territory of the Wunderkammer. Works like *Between Voltaire and Poe* and *The Medicine Cabinet of Mystery* speak to these concerns.

Works like *Memory Box* focus on the history of collecting aspect within my work. The project welcomes viewers to explore the collection of curious objects and artifacts, both natural and artificial, to arrive at a rather poetic microcosm. The work engages the aspects of travel, categorization, wonder, subjectivity, and the souvenir, all salient in the notion of collecting.

As you suggest above I think my project is somewhat cosmological in a sense that it relates to the naturalist tradition in art. Like other artist naturalists, I am devoted to depicting the nature I encounter, but that nature is very different from the one 19th century artist naturalists encountered.

The third road my work takes me down is best embodied in our exhibition by *An Archaeology of Lost Objects*, and that is of course the road of material culture and the archaeological impulse. The interrogation of human produced stuff is related to both environmental issues as well as the story of collecting and museums, but the work I do is distinct in that there are usually three stages in the process – the dig, the processing of the materials and the display. These steps may or may not be visible in the project itself. In the case of *An Archaeology of Lost Objects*, the dig or collecting aspect of the project involved three volunteers who would walk each day from their home to the museum. On the way, they would pick up one object lost or littered on

the street for each block. These are the elements in the work. So there was a great deal of uncertainty about how the piece would look, what it might contain etc. Each object was bagged and labeled in the collecting process and then later assembled as part of the exhibition. The items were catalogued and prepared and then placed in the special designed cabinet.

IMK and CMF: *The fact that we today witness the extinction of exactly those species and natural wonders that were discovered and studied with salient excitement in the historical era of the wunderkammer, is indeed filling one with a sense of melancholy. Because, as you remark, it is a self-inflicted situation that also indicates a human disconnection from the natural world.*

One of the main purposes of our Wunderkammer project is to reinstall art in our everyday lives, e.g. to reunite art with our more general life experiences as well as various scientific research areas with which we are all familiar. Our aim is to develop an exhibition format that will be capable of generating a reconnection between the spectator and the world, in the widest sense of the term, by uniting inner and external realms of human experience. In continuation of your descriptions of your own works above, how do you see your way of working in this context? And could one even claim that the particular relevance of art in our current historical situation is to act as a catalyst for a reintegration of man and nature, individual and surroundings – or, to use a more precise term, Umwelt?

MD: The role of art is complex and obtuse. It has always resisted instrumentalization and fought against attempts to anchor it to the capitalist categories of use-value and the socialist values of the public good. The fact that it is slippery as a field of action is precisely why I like it and defend the activity in all its forms, from the most selfish and narcissistic to the most didactic and propagandistic. Art is exceptional at doing some rather challenging things and speaking about, and in, challenging forms. Building empathy, expressing ambivalence, embodying contradiction, revealing the interconnectedness of things are all possible in art. Art is bridging the divide between the human and non-human world, as you suggest.

How does your Wunderkammer project, in its three parts, embody these values? What are you trying to promote and highlight in the exhibition program? Are you trying to rescue the Wunderkammer from the dustbin of history?

IMK and CMF: *Visual art is often presented from the point of view of the implicit understanding of art by art professionals, and as such as having no relation to the realm of our more general experiences. The most extreme example of this aspect is modernism's so called 'white cube', in which the works, detached from all context, are displayed on a bare, white wall, so that the spectator – at some distance – may contemplate the (master-)pieces chosen by the experts.*

The diametrical opposite of the white cube is the wunderkammer. But our intention is not to save the wunderkammer from the dustbin of history. Rather we want to challenge the prevalent type of thematic exhibition which is the outcome of a curatorial concept such as an arthistorical theme or a current trend where the curator has chosen the artworks to make them fit the theme and – as a worst case scenario – illustrate this theme.

As stated above, in our three present-day Wunderkammern, we will unite art with research from various scientific areas with which we are all familiar, and feel comfortable with, from our daily lives. Our outset is the viewpoints of a physicist, an artist – you –, and a biologist, respectively. By involving scientists from areas radically different from

the art sciences, it is our ambition to connect the art experience with the surrounding world at a primary level, so that we, through meeting with art, are brought closer to the world and get an opportunity to reflect on the basic elements of our existence. This is already evident in your total installation, in which wunderkammer, art work, different scientific disciplines, and phenomena from our everyday lives merge.

In your opinion, might this innovative collaboration with you and with the scientists as co-curators be a step forward towards releasing the potential of art?

MD: I really relate to your suspicion and contempt for the white cube, the space with no identity and context. The hardest thing for me to do as an artist is to make a gallery exhibition in a white cube. There is nothing to push against, no context or situation to expand upon or investigate. All of my best work comes from a dialogue with a site and the white cube is no site at all.

I am not interested in art which merely dialogues with the tradition of art itself. I am excited by a peripatetic art which crosses borders and is not afraid to take a position and speak about the world. So clearly your project goals are very sympathetic to me. The Wunderkammer was above all things a kind of tool and technology for understanding the world. Collectors built the Earth and its riches in miniature in an attempt to comprehend the world. That seems to me what you both are attempting over the course of three exhibitions. I am honored to be a part of the endeavor.

Dette hæfte introducerer den anden udstilling i Esbjerg Kunstmuseums treårige Wunderkammer-projekt, *Wunderkammer 2 – mirabilia**, som museets inspektør Christiane Finsen og direktør Inge Merete Kjeldgaard har kurateret i nært samarbejde med den amerikanske billedkunstner Mark Dion.

Hæftet indledes med en kort introduktion til udstillingen, konceptet bag wunderkammer-serien og til Mark Dion, der i sin kunstneriske praksis er kendt for at gribe tilbage til netop wunderkammeret.

Herefter følger en længere dialog mellem museets kuratorer og kunstneren, der reflekterer over wunderkammeret som et nutidigt format, museale udstillingsformater i det hele taget, museumsinstitutionen og kunstens rolle i samfundet.

Hæftet afsluttes med en værkfortegnelse og Mark Dions CV.

Når alle tre wunderkamre har været vist, udgiver Esbjerg Kunstmuseum en velillustreret bog, der samler hele projektet og bringer både analyser af udstillingerne og resultater fra forskningen i, hvad publikum har oplevet.

* *mirabilia*, (af lat. *mirabilis* forunderlig, beundringsværdig), vidundere, [Gyldendal, Den Store Danske].

Inge Merete Kjeldgaard, museumsdirektør og Christiane Finsen, museumsinspektør ved Esbjerg Kunstmuseum

Hvordan kan museet give publikum kunstopplevelser, der engagerer dem personligt? Hvordan kan man fremme museumsgæsters oplevelse af, at billedkunst har direkte relation til deres livsverden og til verden omkring dem? Det er blandt andet sådanne spørgsmål, vi med Mark Dions soloudstilling *Mirabilia* forsøger at levere svar på, ved at udfordre formatet for den traditionelle kunstmuseale udstilling.

Så en soloudstilling i mere gængs forstand skal man ikke forvente at se. Vi forsøger snarere at etablere en form for forundringsrum, hvor Mark Dions værker er installeret i en dunkel, labyrintisk arkitektur for tilsammen at danne en totalinstallation, som pirrer vores nysgerrighed, appellerer direkte til sanseapparatet og vores bestandige søgen efter nye erkendelser. Ganske vist udgøres udstillingen af enkeltværker, men de fremstår integreret i et flow, der fører os ind i et univers, som overraskende nok forekommer både velkendt og helt uvirkeligt på én gang.

Det første, man træder ind i, er således et tilsyneladende hjemligt rum med paneler og mønstret tapet på væggene og for endevæggen en gammel reol, der er fyldt med forunderlige genstande i overraskende sammenstillinger. Heri forenes på paradoks vis det irrationelle og det rationelle, personificeret i buster af hhv. digteren Edgar Allan Poe og filosofen Voltaire på reolens øverste hylde. Men ved nærmere eftersyn ændrer den hjemlige atmosfære sig til en urovækkende parallelverden, der fremhæves af tapetets mønster. Det udgøres af udryddede dyrearter i en form for apokalyptisk vision, der med en vis portion morbid humor også genfindes i flere af de værker, man ellers møder i udstillingen, bl.a. i *The Fisheries*, hvor eksempler på udryddelsestruede fisk hænger livløse i en form for galge-konstruktion med hovederne nedad.

Når man bevæger sig videre herfra, mødes man af værket *Sealife*, der vækker minder om en arketypisk videnskabelig samling af forskellige præparater i store krukker af glas. Men det er ikke en eksisterende orden eller gængse taksonomiske principper, der mimes her. Det, der ved første øjekast ligner eksotiske søanemoner og andre kuriøse havdyr, er i virkeligheden hunde- og sexlegetøj, der synes at gløde foruroligende unaturligt i alle spektralfarver. Værket sætter således tanker i gang om både den (u)spolerede natur og værdien af vores forsøg på at klassificere verden i al dens diversitet og dynamiske forandring.

Men Dions værker kan ikke alene åbne vores øjne for den måde, vi (mis)bruger naturen på. De kan også få os til at se det smukke og forundringsfulde i helt almindelige og tilsyneladende banale hverdagsobjekter. Det sker f.eks. i *An Archaeology of Lost Objects*, hvor kasserede og tabte genstande får ny betydning og samtidig tilskrives museal værdi, eller i *Memory Box*, hvor ophobede æsker og dåser, fyldt med gamle småting, der engang har tjent et formål, nu vækker minder og som en form for erindringsgenerator

får os til at fremkalde vores egne indre billeder. Med sine værker udfordrer Dion på den måde gængse hierarkier og vedtagne normer for, hvordan man indsamler, kategoriserer og præsenterer kunst og andre genstande. Hans egen måde at skabe kunst på rækker således også langt ud over de enkelte værker, idet de altid allerede indeholder forbindelser til de sammenhænge, som de udstilles eller griber ind i, samtidig med at de også rejser grundlæggende spørgsmål om, hvorfor den moderne museumsinstitution er organiseret, som den er. Og i et videre perspektiv, hvordan dominerende ideologier og samfundsinstitutioner former vores forståelse af historien og naturen – af vores viden om den verden, vi lever i.

Mark Dion udfordrer bevidst den ellers så knæsatte skelnen mellem det objektive og rationelle på den ene side og det subjektive og irrationelle på den anden. Hans spektakulære installationer er ofte modelleret efter 1500- og 1600-tallets wunderkamre, der historisk set er forløbere for vore dages museer. Dengang udgjorde wunderkammeret en encyklopædisk samling af naturalia og kunstfærdige genstande, videnskabelige måleinstrumenter, etnografika, kunst og kuriositeter, der endnu ikke var kategoriserede efter de faggrænser, som siden blev defineret. Men i stedet for naturens elementer og faktiske præparater er det i Dions wunderkammer menneskets gengivelser og opfattelser af dem, vi præsenteres for. På den måde er det også vores eget blik på vores omverden, vi konfronteres med. I hans kunstneriske univers, der ultimativt set er spændt ud mellem polerne liv og død, vækkes vores forundring på ny samtidig med, at vores angst for og begær efter at forestille os scenarier for fremtiden får form – forsonende nok med et humoristisk twist.

Mirabilia er den anden wunderkammer-udstilling i en serie på tre, som Esbjerg Kunstmuseum modtog *Udstillingsprisen Vision* for i 2017. Med prisen honorerer Bikubenfonden en visionær idé, som kan "skabe rum for nytænkning af udstillingsformater med kunsten i centrum", og som modtageren bagefter har mulighed for at realisere. Vores tre nutidige wunderkamre udvikles med udgangspunkt i henholdsvis en fysikers, en kunstners – Mark Dion – og en biologs faglige perspektiv på verden. Den første udstilling, *Wunderkammer 1 – flydende form* (2018), blev til gennem et omfattende samarbejde med professor i fysik ved DTU, Tomas Bohr, og hans team, mens den tredje udstilling (2020) kurateres i partnerskab med DNA-forskerne professor Eske Willerslev og lektor Martin Sikora fra Center for GeoGenetik på Københavns Universitet. Når vi ikke alene tager afsæt i billedkunsten, som man normalt ville forvente på et kunstmuseum, men også vender os mod biologien og fysikken, er det for at inddrage områder, der beskæftiger sig med de mest basale og grundlæggende forhold omkring den menneskelige eksistens. Hvor biologien har fokus på at udforske selve livet og livsfunktionerne, er fysikken optaget af stoffet og energien i den natur, der omgiver os. Og her, i et felt af evig undren og søgen efter sammenhæng og mening mødes kunsten og naturvidenskaben og komplementerer hinanden. For begge forsøger de at udvide vores billeder af verden og fra hver sin side nærme sig eksistensens mysterium.

Mark Dion arbejder sammen med både naturvidenskabelige forskere og humanister. Men med dette projekt er det første gang, denne efterspurgt billedkunstner indgår i en serie af udstillinger, der ud fra så forskellige vinkler beskæftiger sig både eksperimenterende og forskningsmæssigt med wunderkammeret, som han har været optaget af siden 1990'erne.

Med dette samarbejdsprojekt håber vi at få åbnet døren til det personlige undrekammer, som vi alle er født med, ved at forbinde de individuelle erfaringsverdener med den

store, forunderlige verden, der omgiver os alle sammen. For engageret og entusiastisk at træde ind i dette ikke helt enkle og eksperimenterende projekt retter vi en dybtfølt og ekstraordinært stor tak til Mark Dion. Samarbejdet har været yderst stimulerende, båret af både imødekommenhed og udviklende kunstfaglig sparring.

Desuden retter vi en stor tak til kunstnerens assistent Nathan Catlin og til Guillaume Blanc, der har fremstillet tapeterne. For udlån af værker takker vi Sammlang Liebelt, Galerie Nagel Draxler, Galerie In Situ og Waldburger Wouters og for venlig assistance Tanya Bonakdar Gallery samt Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane. Endelig skal der lyde en meget stor tak til Bikubenfonden og dens jury for at have valgt at give netop vores udstillingsidé den fornemme anerkendelse og til Augustinus Fonden for yderligere støtte til projektet.

i dialog med mark dion

Inge Merete Kjeldgaard, museumsdirektør og Christiane Finsen, museumsinspektør ved Esbjerg Kunstmuseum

IMK og CMF: *Indledningsvis vil vi gerne takke dig for, at du tog imod invitationen til at deltage i vores Wunderkammer-projekt, som Bikubenfonden har givet os Udstillingsprisen Vision for. Vi er både meget taknemmelige for og stolte af, at du vil bidrage til projektet. Men hvad fik dig til at sige ja?*

MD: Der var flere faktorer, der tiltrak mig ved projektet. Jeg har jo arbejdet med wunderkammerkonceptet siden begyndelsen af 1990'erne. Min oprindelige interesse opstod ud af mine undersøgelser af det naturhistoriske museum som et sted, hvor der produceres viden om selve emnet 'natur'. Jeg ville gerne opnå en dybere forståelse af museumsinstitutionens historie, og med det som den røde tråd befandt jeg mig til sidst ved samlinger fra tiden før oplysningstiden. Siden da har det været afgørende for min kunstneriske praksis at praktisere wunderkammerets æstetik.

Danmark har en særlig placering i wunderkammerhistorien i kraft af Ole Worms 'Musei Wormiani Historia', hvor frontispicen fra Museum Wormanium afbilder Ole Worms raritetskabinet. Derfor regner jeg med, at konceptet forstås og værdsættes af det danske publikum. Jeg er også tæt på kunstneren Rosamond Purcell, som har en slags heltestatus for mig, og som stod bag den bemærkelsesværdige rekonstruktion af Worms rum. En anden grund var den umiskendelige og overbevisende entusiasme, som I to udviste, da I kontaktede mig. Jeg er, måske endda først og fremmest, entusiast. Det er et karaktertræk, som jeg genkender og beundrer hos andre. Lige fra vores første kontakt var det helt tydeligt, at det ville blive et sjovt og spændende samarbejde. Der er ikke så meget morskab i mit liv, så det er vigtigt for mig at have det sjovt, når det er muligt.

IMK og CMF: *Er det overhovedet muligt at arbejde på et museum uden at være entusiastisk? For os at se er det netop den form for energi, der har fremkaldt et projekt som Wunderkammer. Men samtidig er vi meget optagede af, hvordan man som museum kan vække en lignende form for entusiasme i museets gæster. Tror du, at wunderkammeret i særlig grad kan fremme et sådant personligt engagement?*

MD: Jeg tænker på wunderkammerkonceptet eller -traditionen som en vigtig metode til at udvikle museet æstetisk og strategisk ved at se tilbage. Wunderkammeret var en vej, museerne netop ikke gik i oplysningstiden, hvor man stræbte efter at finde universelle og videnskabeligt funderede måder at vise ting frem på. Denne model fik så stor succes, at museers udstillinger var ens, uanset om man befandt sig i Milano, Edinburgh, Cairo eller Helsinki. Linnés taksonomi blev standardmåden at organisere naturhistoriske museer på lige indtil midten af det tyvende århundrede. På kunstmuseerne blev de faste taksonomier kronologi, stilart, nationalitet og den sædvanlige fremskridts- og modernitetstænkning.

I wunderkammeret eller kunstkammeret er der en tendens til, at disse kategorier blandes – samlingerne er radikalt heterogene, set med vores velordnede kunstsyn. Et

indtørret havvæsen, der ligger ved siden af et maleri, over for et strudseæg i en kunstfærdig sølvindfatning – alt dette synes at være meget følelsesbåret og ikke strengt didaktisk på konventionel manér. Sammenstillingerne af objekter og deres indbyrdes placering er langt mere pirrende, forunderlig og udfordrende – det kræver mere af beskueren end blot at være passiv modtager af information. Som I også bemærker, medfører det, at museumsgæsten bliver dybere engageret i at få mening ud af det udstillede og dermed selv genererer viden.

Noget af det, jeg finder mest spændende ved wunderkammeret som fænomen i den tidlige europæiske modernitet, er, at det ikke er begrænset til kun at dække ét område. Denne form for samlinger er idiosynkratiske – i stedet for at være opbygget på basis af de samme principper er de organiseret på vidt forskellig vis. I nogle tilfælde følger organiseringen kosmologiske principper, i andre allegoriske, magiske eller teologiske og atter andre proto-videnskabelige. De er alle udtryk for magt, der er indlejret i en bredere kolonialistisk kontekst; men hvordan de udtrykker dette, og hvad de har som mål, er langt fra universelt og for en stor dels vedkommende stadig ikke helt klart. Alligevel mener jeg, at jeg som kunster og undertiden kurator kan lære meget ved at studere wunderkamre og ved at anvende aspekter af deres metodologi og æstetik.

IMK og CMF: *Dit svar rummer adskillige interessante betragtninger, som vi gerne vil vende tilbage til i denne samtale. Men lad os begynde med din egen kunstneriske praksis. Kunne du udfolde lidt nærmere, hvordan du i dit arbejde specifikt bruger wunderkammeret?*

Hvordan vil du beskrive forholdet mellem wunderkammeret som form og indhold i dit arbejde?

MD: Når jeg beskæftiger mig med wunderkammerkonceptet, har jeg noget meget specifikt i tankerne: europæiske samlinger fra det 16. og 17. århundrede, som jeg kender fra nutidige renæssancehistorikere, jeg enten har læst, mødt på konferencer eller er i konstruktiv dialog med. For mig at se er wunderkammeret ikke en altomfattende betegnelse, der dækker alle mulige excentriske eller idiosynkratiske samlinger. For mig er begrebet stringent og meget historisk specifikt. Mine egne værker og skulpturer kopierer måske nok aspekter af wunderkammerets sensibilitet, jævnfør de heterogene udstillingsmetodologier; og selv om jeg specifikt refererer til traditionen og dens diskursive følsomhed, er det jo ikke et wunderkammer, jeg skaber. Jeg genskaber altså ikke en før-oplysningstids samling.

I stedet har jeg udtænkt en ny måde at italesætte og reflektere over de europæiske samlings oprindelige idé ved at anvende materialer, udstillingsinventar og teknikker fra installationskunst i stedet for blot at bruge tekster og billedmateriale, som en historiker nok ville have gjort. Derfor kan wunderkammerkonceptet både ses som formen på og indholdet af bestemte værker. Nogle værker er bevidste undersøgelser af renæssance-samlinger, men set fra et postkolonialt perspektiv.

Jeg talte med Paula Findlen, som er en fremtrædende forsker inden for de tidlige moderne samlinger og deres kontekst, og vi var enige om, at det, der er så spændende ved at studere dette historiske fænomen, er, at der stadig er så meget vi ikke ved (og måske aldrig får viden om) med hensyn til wunderkamre og det kulturelle landskab, som fik dem til at blomstre. Der eksisterer et stærkt bånd af entusiasme og passion mellem de forskere og kunstnere, som er optagede af dette område. Indimellem kan det være svært for os at huske på, at det ikke er alle, der deler lidenskab for dette emne på samme måde, som vi gør.

IMK og CMF: *Tidligere i samtalen talte du om, at wunderkammeret rummer potentialet til at videreudvikle museumsinstitutionen ved at sende blikket tilbage til fortiden.*

Når vi taler om wunderkammeret har vi – ligesom du – ingen intentioner om at mime det på et indholdsmæssigt plan, og vi kan heller ikke se noget perspektiv i at anvende det som scenografisk kulisser på et mere overfladisk niveau. Så vi er enige med dig, når du afviser enhver form for genoplivning af fortiden. Vores projekt drejer sig i stedet om at gentænke wunderkammeret som fænomen og indsætte det i en aktuel kontekst. Og det, der i den forbindelse særligt interesserer os, er nogle centrale forhold, som kendetegner det historiske wunderkammer, især disse tre: en grundlæggende nysgerrighed over for verdens fænomener og de sammenhænge, der kan etableres mellem dem; en heterogen præsentationsform, som kan tilføre nutidens udstilling såvel variation som elementer af undren og uoverskuelighed; og endelig en encyklopædisk dimension, der nedbryder de veletablerede faggrænser og forener forskellige måder at forholde sig til verden på.

Hvordan vil du beskrive den rolle, disse forhold spiller i dit kunstneriske arbejde? Og i forlængelse heraf: Hvorfor er det i dag vigtigt at skabe nye måder at italesætte og reflektere over de oprindelige præsentationer af europæiske samlinger, hvilket du jo fremhæver, at det er?

MD: De tre egenskaber ved wunderkammertraditionen, som I har fundet frem til, er efter min mening nyttige for at kunne skelne mellem wunderkammeret og oplysningstidens senere systemer med hensyn til udstilling og organisering. Jeres første aspekt (den grundlæggende nysgerrighed både over for verdens under og forbindelserne imellem dem) vil jeg dog mene også gælder for oplysningstiden, men for mig har magi og det overnaturlige en langt større plads i wunderkammeret. I bund og grund tror jeg, det handler om, at renæssancens organisatorer og samlere stræbte efter at finde det hemmelige sprog, som den guddommelige skaberkraft havde indlejret i naturen. De indsamlede objekter blev tillagt magiske egenskaber, som for samlerne var virkelige, men som også havde symbolfunktioner. Naturligvis opererede videnskabsmænd i oplysningstiden og i det 19. århundrede også med en slags naturteologi og betragtede derfor naturstudier som en gudsfrøgtig handling; men jeg vil mene, at magiens rolle i wunderkamrene er et af de aspekter, der adskilte dem fra senere måder at samle på. Jeg er altid interesseret i at finde ud af, hvorledes wunderkammer og museum er forskellige i stedet for blot at se på wunderkammeret som et tidligt stadium i museernes udviklingshistorie.

Selv tror jeg ikke på magi, men som kunstner snarere end som videnskabsmand forstår jeg nytten af og magten bag symbolsprog. Måske er det derfor, kunstnere føler sig så draget af wunderkammeret, og surrealistiske finder raritetskabinetter så uimodståelige.

Jeres egenskab nummer to, der drejer sig om det heterogene udstillingsformat, er en anden vigtig forskel på wunderkammeret og senere museale udstillingsformer. Det interessante ved traditionerne bag de tidlige moderne samlinger er netop, at denne heterogene præsentation måske er til stede i selve objekterne. En genstand i et kunstkammer kan bestå af en blanding af en af naturens mærkværdigheder – en nautilusskal, en bezoarsten, en rød koral eller et horn fra et næsehorn – og kunstfærdigt guld- eller sølvarbejde og samtidig endog være tillagt komplekse funktioner. Sådanne objekter kan også have mere pragmatiske magiske funktioner såsom at yde beskyttelse eller give varsler.

Den sidste af jeres tre egenskaber, hvor I beskriver, hvordan de traditionelle faggrænser ophæves, tror jeg måske italesætter de kosmologiske impulser i wunderkammeret. Det vil sige de mikrokosmos-agtige rekonstruktioner af verden, organiseret rundt om komplekse allegoriske strukturer som elementerne, årstiderne, sindstilstande, osv. Måske udgør de encyklopædier over objekter, hvor samlerne selv (som altid er til stede), er teksterne. Når man betragter de tidlige afbildninger af wunderkamre, ser man ofte mænd, der diskuterer og peger på noget. For wunderkamre var steder, fulde af liv, hvor folk førte samtaler og diskuterede. Det besøgende publikum og samlernes organisatorer var i konstant dialog med hinanden, og måske foregik der ligefrem byttehandler.

Når museer udstiller wunderkammer- og kunstkammergenstande, anvender de for det meste en af to udstillingsstrategier. Nogle forsøger at rekonstruere den oprindelige kontekst, som for eksempel Grünes Gewölbe i Dresden, mens andre organiserer udstillingen ligesom en juvelerbutik ved at highlighte de fornemste objekter, som det er tilfældet i kunstkammeret på Wiens Kunsthistorisches Museum. Hvis jeg får valget mellem de to, foretrækker jeg klart tilgangen hos Grünes Gewölbe, hvor den besøgende gives mulighed for at forstå objekterne med det kongelige hof og skatkammer som kontekst.

IMK og CMF: *Du beskriver wunderkammeret som et mikrokosmos og en encyklopædi over genstande. Du nævner også, hvordan samlere og de, der besøgte deres wunderkamre, udveksle verdensanskuelser, når de stod og betragtede genstandene sammen. Kunne man sige, at du som kunstner fortsætter denne bestandige dialog og udveksling på et symbolsk plan, naturligvis i et nutidigt perspektiv? Og kunne du i givet fald give os nogle eksempler – fortælle, hvad der ligger bag nogle af dine værker i udstillingen?*

MD: I det store og hele følger mit arbejde to eller tre spor, som krydser hinanden og sommetider er parallelle. Det første spor, som jeg har fulgt længst, handler om biodiversitet, udryddelse af dyrearter og nedbrydning af miljøet. Mine arbejder i dette spor udspringer af vrede og frustration; jeg udtrykker mig gennem kunsten for at kunne udholde den stadige strøm af dybt deprimerende nyheder om vores suidale forhold til naturens verden. På en vis måde giver wunderkammerets historiske periode udtryk for en art livsglad forundring ved de nye planter, dyr, mennesker og steder, som europæerne opdagede i den tidlige kolonitid. Jeg opfatter det sådan, at der nu er sat en stopklods for denne glæde i kraft af vores nuværende melankolske perspektiv – nu sørger vi over at miste netop det, vi forundredes over dengang (koraller, større dyr, eksotiske fugle, osv.). Disse arter forsvinder naturligvis på grund af kolonialisme, kapitalisme og den industrielle revolution, som vi har indført over hele verden. Så værker som *The Fisheries*, *The Old Crow*, *Sea Life* og *Rhinoceros Horn* udgør en reaktion på præcis disse bekymringer.

Et andet spor, jeg følger, er museumshistorie og historien om naturhistorien. Det kom jeg frem til, da jeg forsøgte at forstå den konceptuelle baggrund for og grundlæggende epistemologi bag vores miljømæssige krise, som synes at være udsprunget af idéhistorien. Dette spor fører mig gennem wunderkammerets område. Værker som *Between Voltaire and Poe* og *The Medicine Cabinet of Mystery* drejer sig om dette, mens et værk som *Memory Box* fokuserer på historien om det at samle som en del af mit arbejde. Det er et projekt, der inviterer beskueren til at udforske samlingen af kuriøse objekter og kunstgenstande, både naturlige og kunstige, med det formål at nå frem til et ganske poetisk mikrokosmos. Og dette arbejde involverer aspekter som rejseri, kategorisering og undren, subjektivitet og souvenirs – aspekter, der alle er væsentlige for det at skabe samlinger.

Som I foreslår ovenfor, mener jeg, at mit projekt er forholdsvis kosmologisk i den forstand, at det forholder sig til den tradition i kunsten, der dyrker naturen. Lige som det er tilfældet for andre kunstnere inden for denne tradition, er det meget vigtigt for mig at skildre den natur, jeg møder, omend den er ganske anderledes end den, natur-engagerede kunstnere i det 19. århundrede befandt sig i.

Det tredje spor, som mit arbejde leder mig ad, fremstår tydeligst i vores udstilling i værket *An Archaeology of Lost Objects*. Der er naturligvis tale om det spor, der udgøres af den materielle kultur og den arkæologiske impuls. Undersøgelsen af menneskeskabt materiale har forbindelse til såvel miljøspørgsmål som samlings- og museumshistorie, men mit arbejde skiller sig ud herfra ved, at der normalt er tre stadier i processen – indsamling, behandling og udstilling. Disse stadier kan være synlige i selve projektet, men er det ikke nødvendigvis. I arbejdet med *An Archaeology of Lost Objects* var der brug for tre frivillige, der i indsamlingsfasen hver dag gik til fods fra deres bolig til museet.

På vejen skulle de samle et tabt eller bortkastet objekt op for hver gade, de passerede. Disse genstande udgør værkets elementer. Derfor var der stor usikkerhed om, hvordan værket ville komme til at se ud, hvad det ville ende med at indeholde osv. Som en del af indsamlingsprocessen blev hver genstand emballeret og mærket; og som en del af udstillingen blev objekterne senere sammenstillet. De blev katalogiseret og klargjort og derefter anbragt i et specialdesignet møbel.

IMK og CMF: *Når vi i dag er vidne til udryddelsen af netop de arter og undere i naturen, som man på det historiske wunderkammers tid opdagede og undersøgte med stor begejstring, bliver man i sandhed fyldt af melankoli. For, som du jo selv bemærker, er der tale om en situation, vi selv har bragt os i, og som samtidig tyder på, at mennesket har mistet forbindelsen til naturen.*

Et af hovedformålene med vores wunderkammerprojekt er at bringe kunsten ind i vores hverdag ved at genforene den både med vores livserfaringer og forskning i forskellige vidensområder, som vi alle er fortrolige med. Vi har til hensigt at udvikle et udstillingsformat, der kan genskabe forbindelsen mellem betragter og verden i ordets videste forstand, ved at åbne for forbindelsen mellem menneskets indre og ydre erfaringsverden. I forlængelse af beskrivelsen af dine egne værker ovenfor, vil vi gerne høre, hvordan du betragter din måde at arbejde på i denne kontekst? Og kan man måske ligefrem hævde, at kunstens særlige relevans i vores aktuelle historiske situation er at fungere som katalysator for en udveksling mellem menneske og natur, individ og omgivelser – eller for at bruge en mere præcis term, Umwelt?

MD: Kunstens rolle er kompleks, og kunsten er sejlivet. Den har altid unddraget sig instrumentaliserings og kæmpet imod forsøg på at forankre den, både i de kapitalistiske værdisystemer og i socialismens ideer om f.eks. almenvellet. Selve det faktum, at kunsten som felt er svær at få hold på, er årsagen til, at jeg synes om den og er parat til at forsvare kunstneriske aktiviteter af alle slags, lige fra de mest egoistiske og narcissistiske til de mest propagandistiske og didaktiske. Kunst udmærker sig ved at kunne udfordre både indholdsmæssigt og formelt. At skabe empati, udtrykke tvetydighed, vise modsætningsforhold, afsløre forbindelser mellem ting – alt dette lader sig gøre i kunsten. Det samme gælder, som I nævner, også det at slå bro mellem den menneskelige og den ikke-menneskelige verden.

Hvordan kan jeres wunderkammerprojekt i dets tre dele rumme disse værdier? Hvad forsøger I at fremme og understrege i udstillingsprogrammet? Forsøger I at redde wunderkammeret fra at ende i historiens papirkurv?

IMK og CMF: *Ofte har præsentationer af billedkunst rod i en indforstået kunstfaglighed og er dermed uden relation til vores almene erfaringsverden. Det mest ekstreme eksempel er modernismens 'hvide kube', hvor værker udstilles løsrevet fra enhver kontekst på en ren, hvid væg, så man på afstand uforstyrret kan kontemplere de (mester)værker, som fagkundskaben har udvalgt.*

Den hvide kubens diametrale modsætning er wunderkammeret. Men vi har ingen intentioner om at redde wunderkammeret fra historiens affaldsspand. I stedet vil vi udfordre den gængse temaudstilling, der er resultatet af en særlig kuratorisk idé – et kunsthistorisk tema, en tendens i tiden eller lignende, hvor udstillingens værker som regel udvælges således, at de hver især refererer direkte til temaet og i værste fald illustrerer det.

Som vi allerede har nævnt, vil vores tre nutidige wunderkamre forene kunst med forskning i forskellige vidensområder, som vi alle har direkte erfaring med fra vores daglige liv og derfor er fortrolige med. Vi tager afsæt i henholdsvis en fysikers, en kunstners – din – og en biologs optik. Ved at involvere forskere inden for helt andre fagområder

end det kunstvidenskabelige er det vores ambition at få kunstoplevelsen forbundet med vores omverden på et fundamentalt niveau, således at vi gennem mødet med kunsten bliver bragt tættere på verden og får mulighed for at reflektere over tilværelsens grundvilkår. Denne måde at tænke på kommer allerede til udtryk i din totalinstallation, hvor wunderkammer, kunstværk, forskellige videnskabelige discipliner og fænomener fra vores hverdagsliv smelter sammen.

Tror du, at det innovative kuratoriske samarbejde med en kunstner som dig og med forskellige naturvidenskabelige forskere kan bane vejen for at frisætte kunstens potentiale?

MD: Jeg deler fuldstændig jeres mistænksomhed og foragt for den hvide kube, et rum uden identitet og kontekst. Det sværeste for mig som kunstner er at skabe en galleriudstilling i en hvid kube. Der er ikke noget at spille op imod, ingen kontekst eller situation at bygge videre på eller undersøge. Alle mine bedste arbejder er opstået i en dialog med et sted, og den hvide kube er i bund og grund et ikke-sted.

Jeg interesserer mig ikke for kunst, som kun er i dialog med selve kunsttraditionen. Derimod går jeg op i kunst, der er peripatetisk, som er grænseoverskridende, ikke holdningsforskrækket, og som handler om verden. Derfor er jeg helt på bølgelængde med målene for jeres projekt. Wunderkammeret var frem for alt et redskab og en teknologi, der skulle fremme forståelsen af verden; samlerne genopbyggede verden og dens rigdomme i miniatureformat i et forsøg på at begribe den. For mig synes det at være netop det, I forsøger at gøre i løbet af jeres tre udstillinger. Jeg er bæret over at være en del af de bestræbelser.

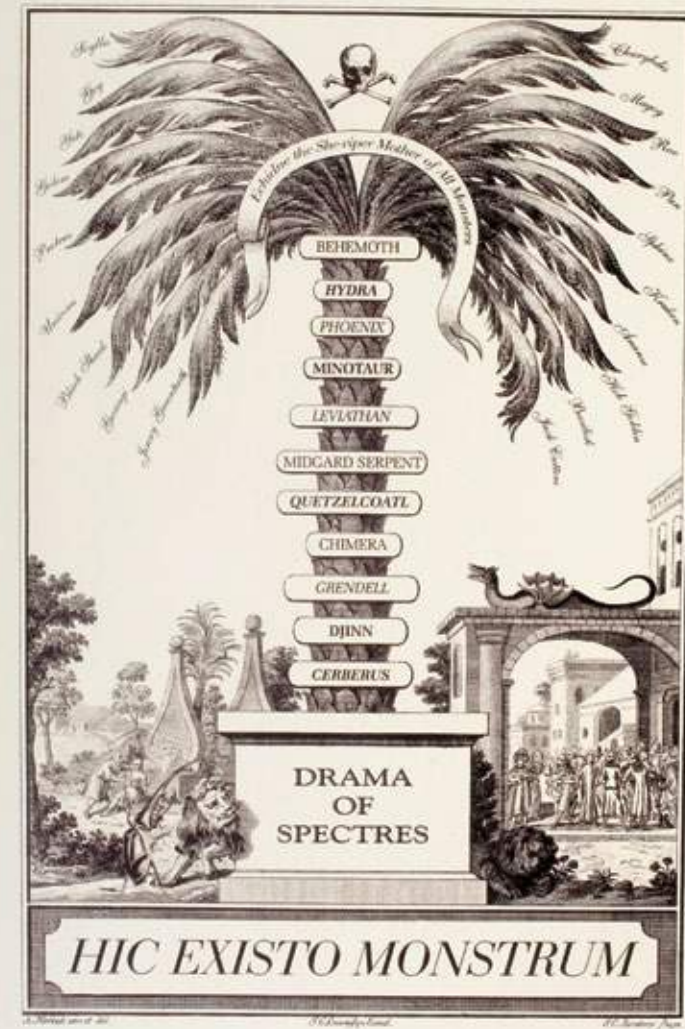




1. *Between Voltaire and Poe*, 2016
6. *Extinction Wallpaper*



2004



2004



de la... Michel... 2004



de la... Michel... 2004



8. *The Fisheries*, 2016

10. *Trouble with Jellyfish*, 2016





11. *Cupboard of Natural Wonders*, 2019



12. *Cabinet of Marvels*, 2019



13. *The Amateur Naturalist* (1980s), 2019





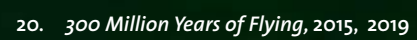
15. *The Old Crow*, 2016



16. *Bookstall – The Natural World*, 2015









21. *Rhinoceros Horn*, 2014



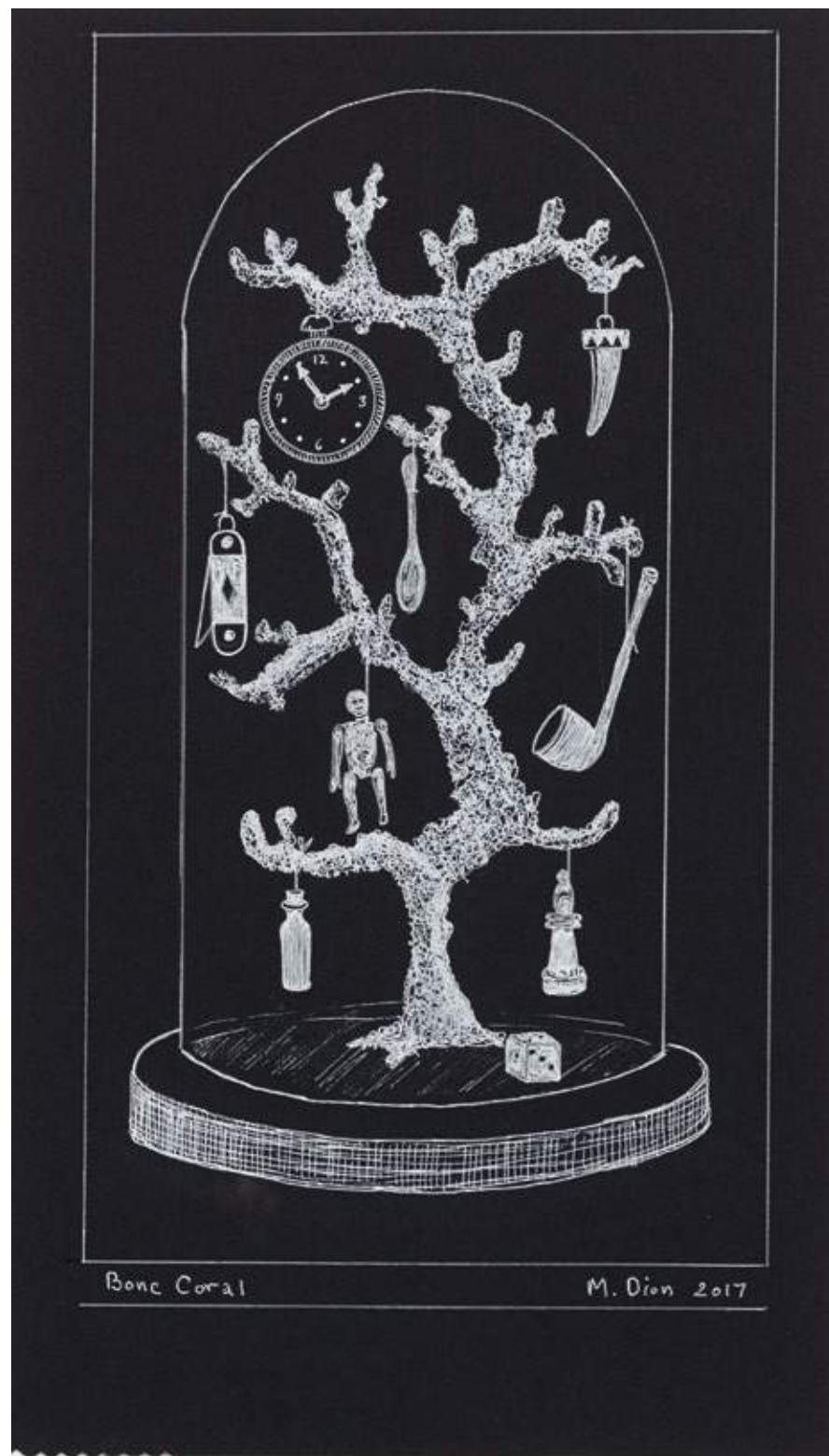
22. *The Medicine Cabinet of Mystery*, 2013

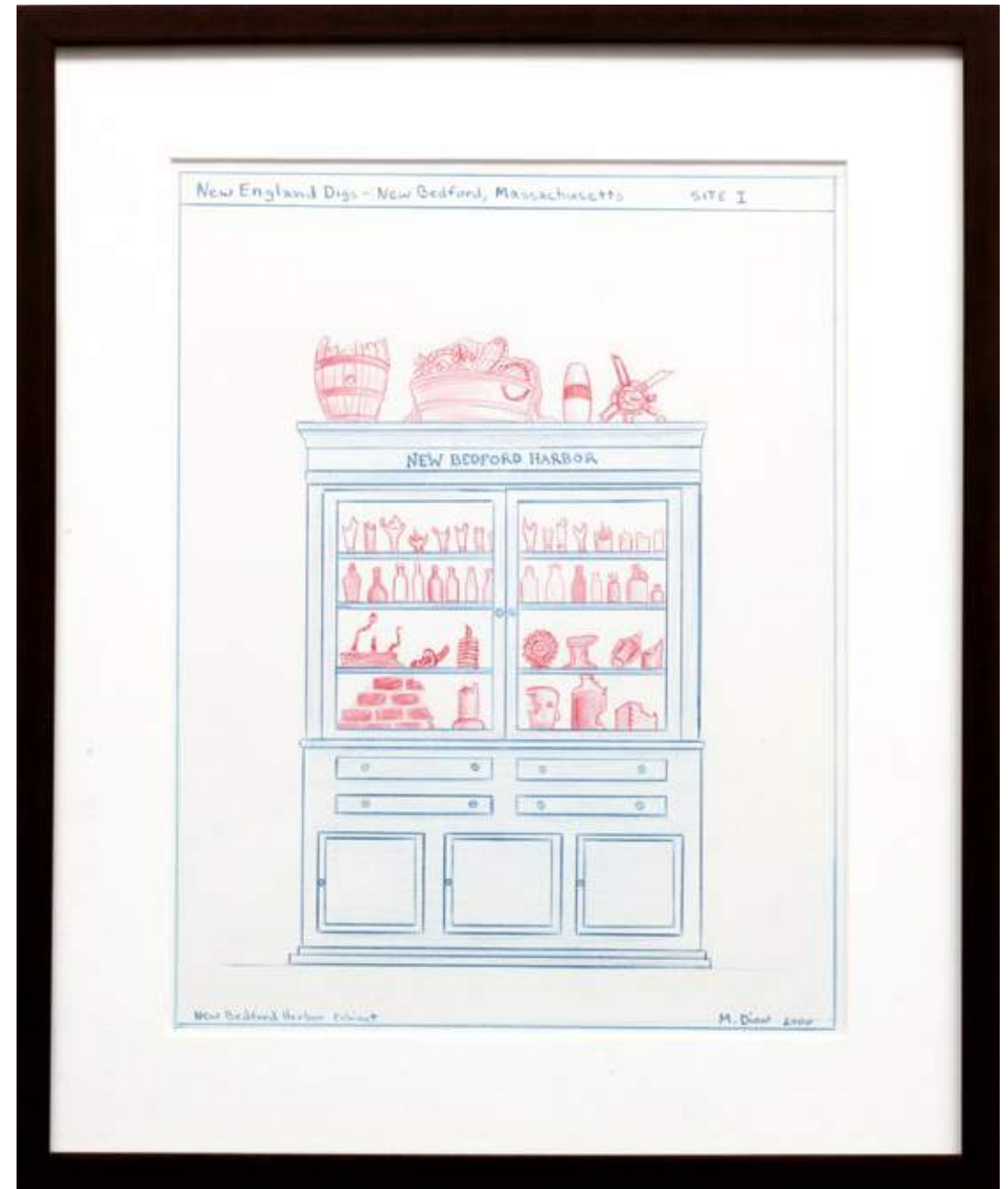
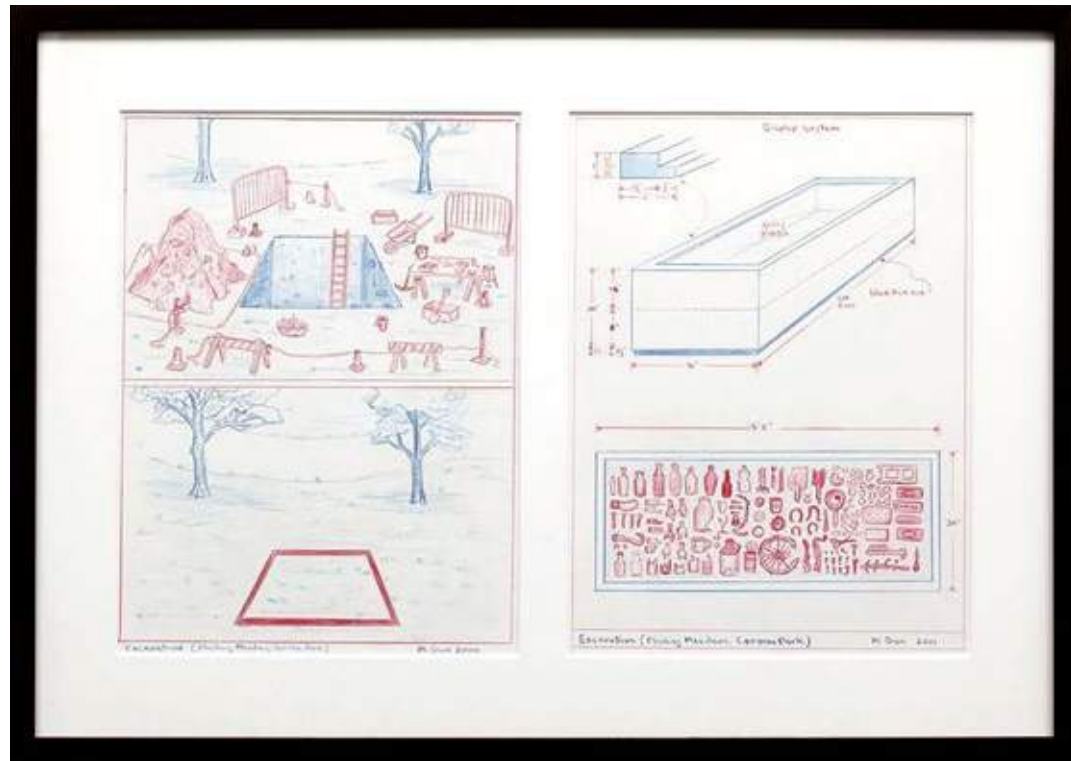




50. *Wonder Workshop*, 2014
 27. *The Plush Snake*, 2018
 28. *List of Diminutive Objects*, 2015

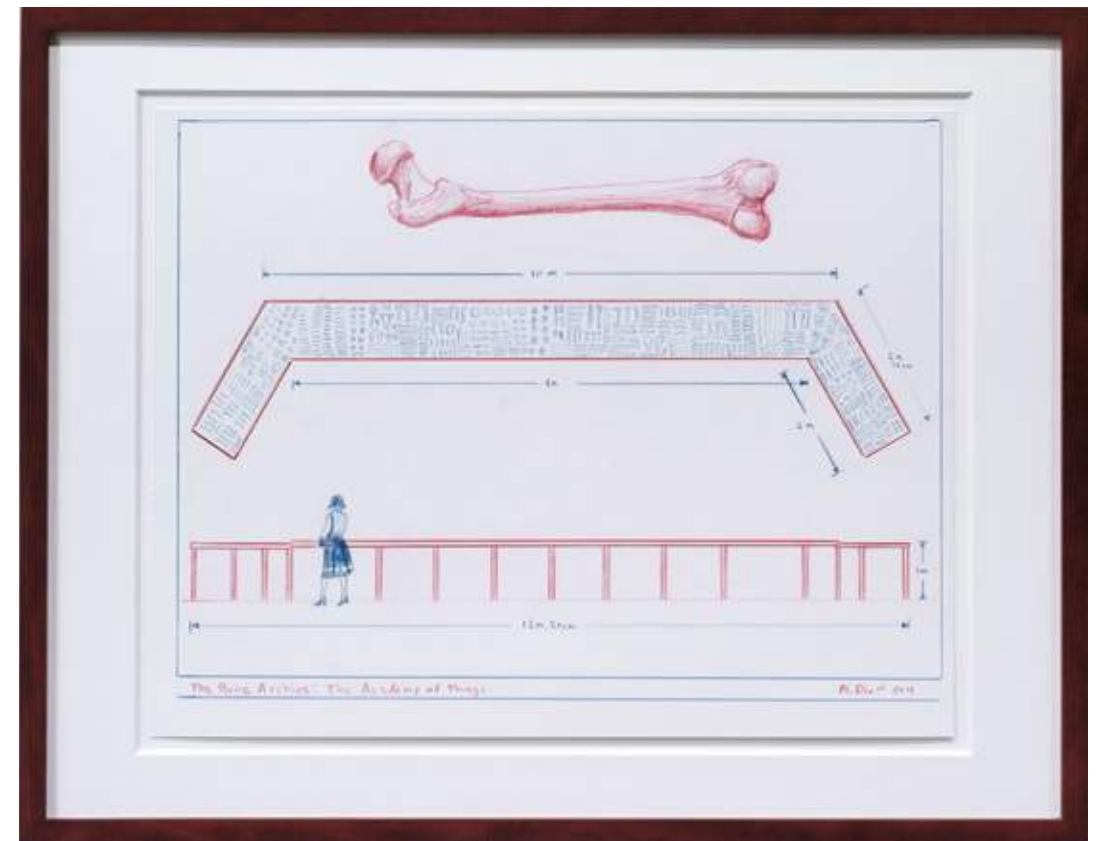
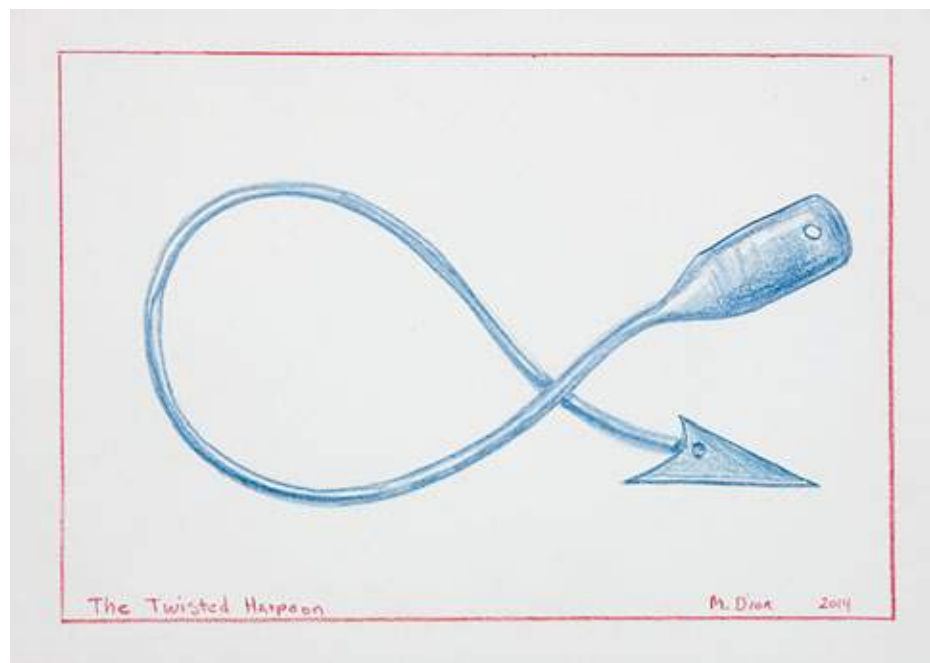
29. *The Phantasmal Cabinet*, 2016
 30. *Concerned Hunting*, 2017





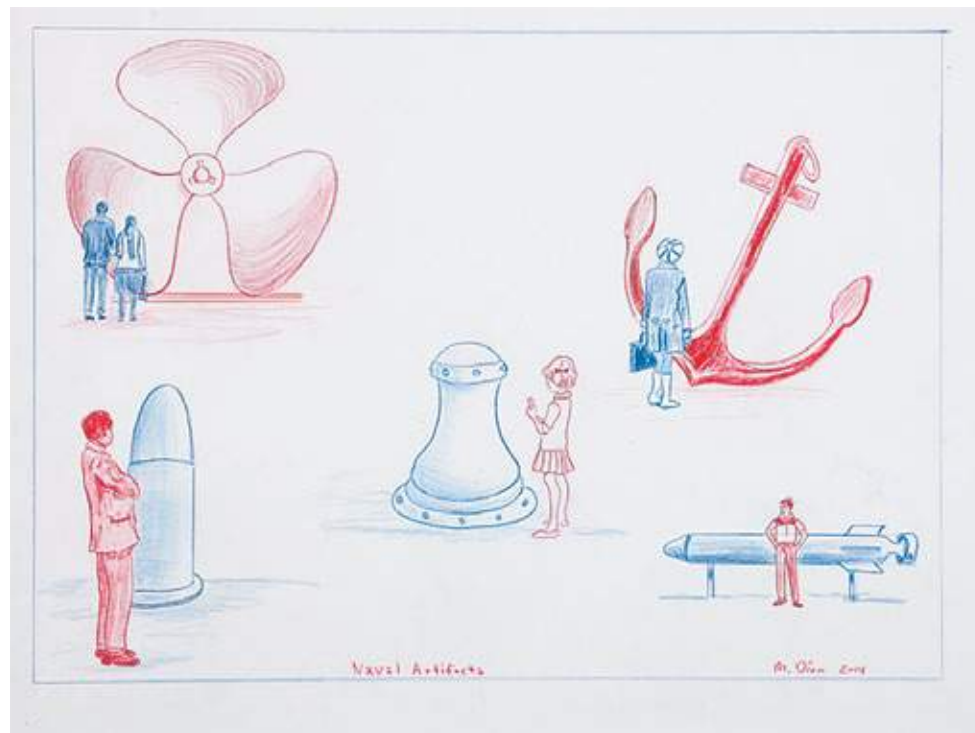
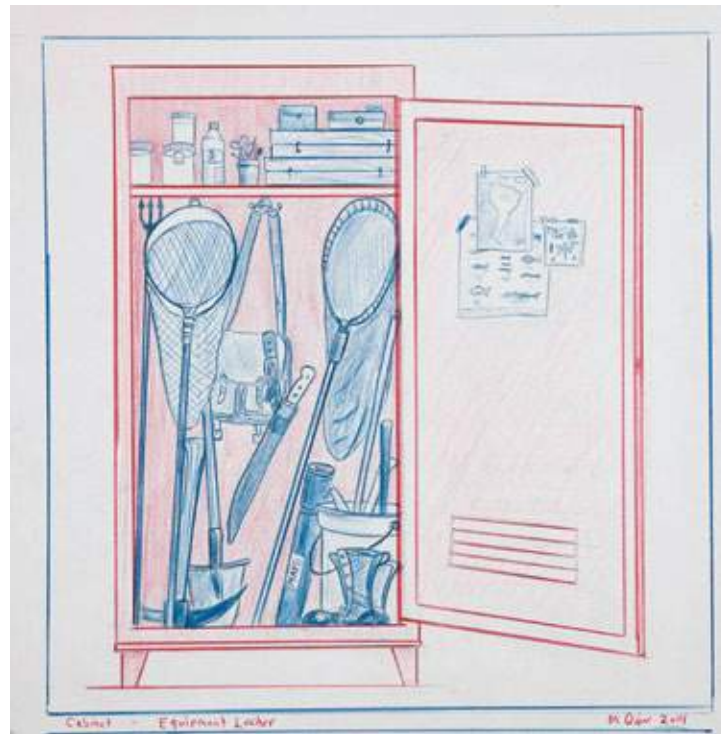
34. *Excavation (Flushing Meadows Corona Park)*, 2000
 35. *Crocket (The Frontiersman at Home)*, 1999
 38. *The Big Game Hunter at Home*, 1992

36. *New England Digs- New Bedford Massachusetts*, 2000



39. *The Magpie*, 2015
 41. *The Unicorn Horn*, 2014
 42. *The Twisted Harpoon*, 2014

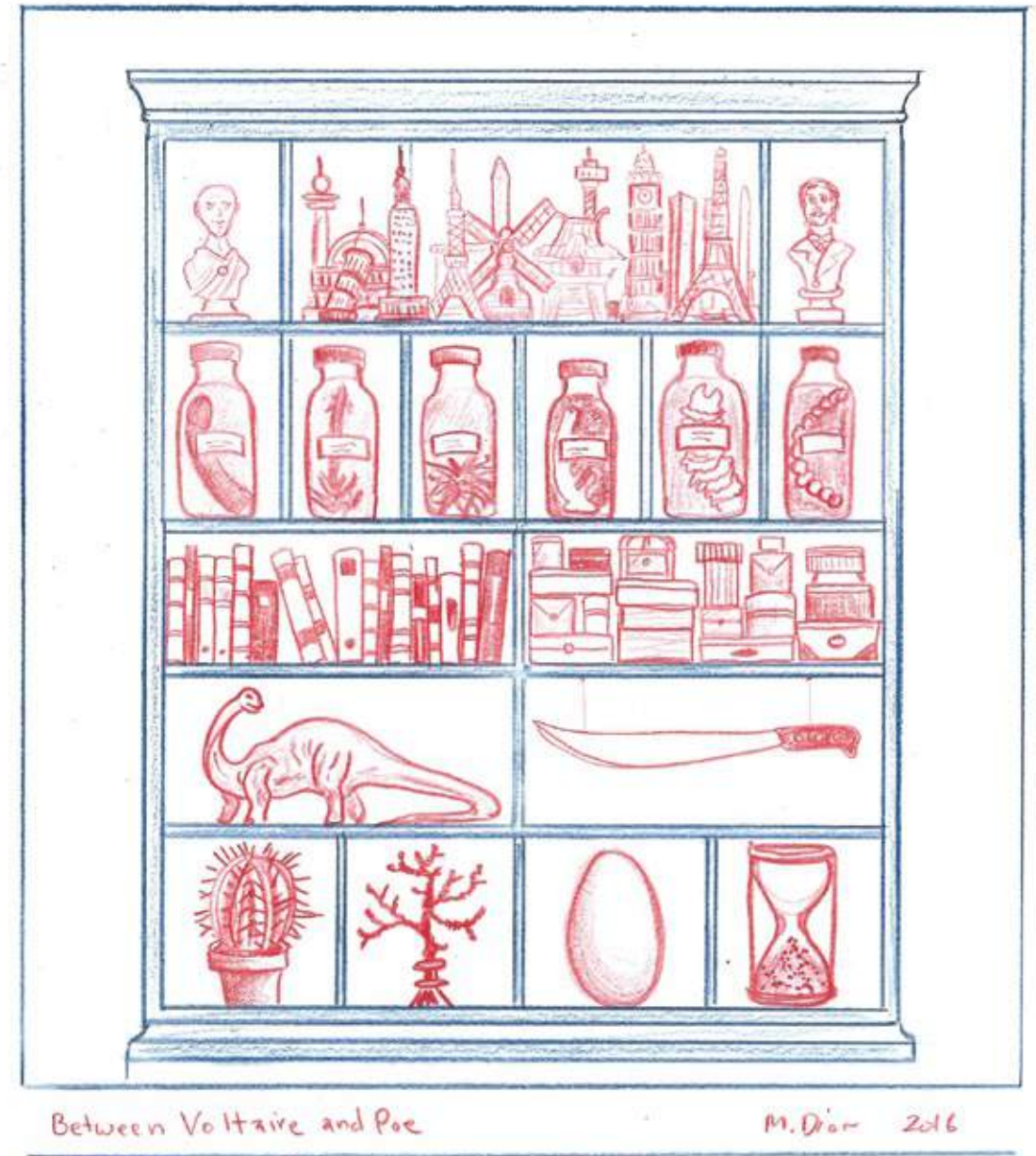
43. *The Bone Archive: The Academy of Things*, 2014
 45. *Adventures in the Dark Museum (Zebra)*, 2014

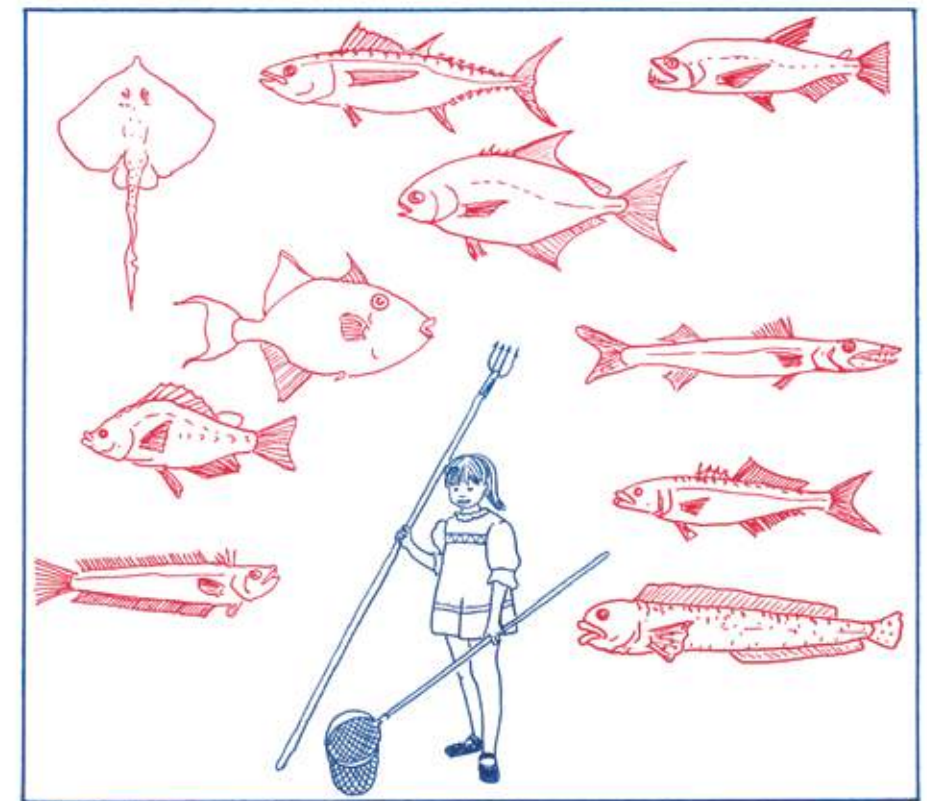
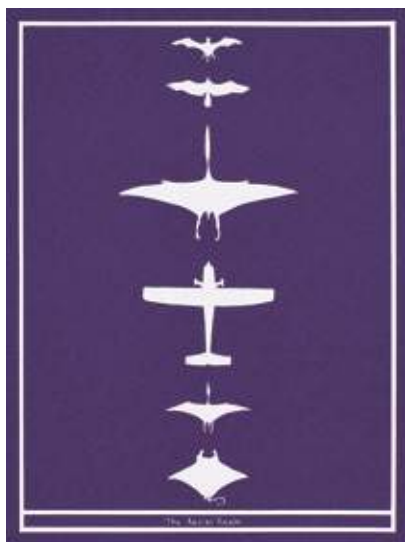
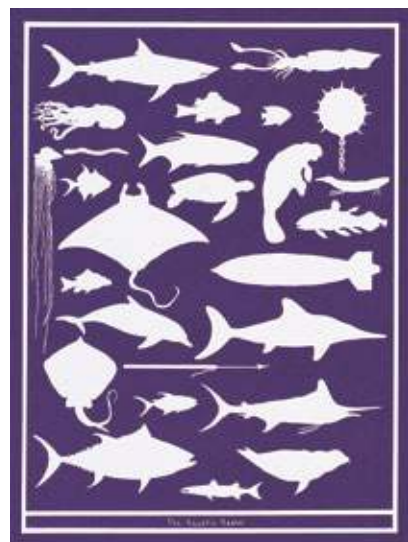




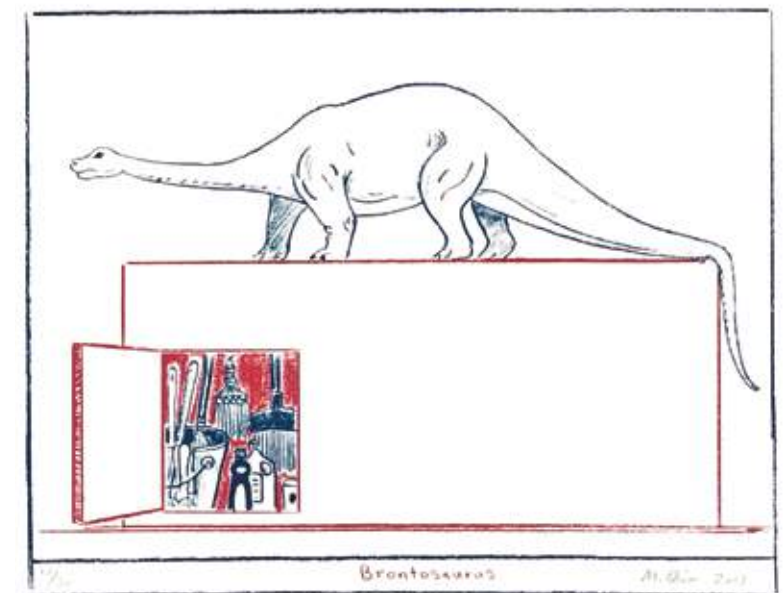
48. *Floating History Laboratory Archaeology Field Station - History LAB*, 2014
 49. *Buffalo Bayou-Invasive Plant Eradication Unit*, 2011

51. *Invasive Plant Eradication Unit*, 2008
 52. *Jagdhütte (interior studies)*, 2000

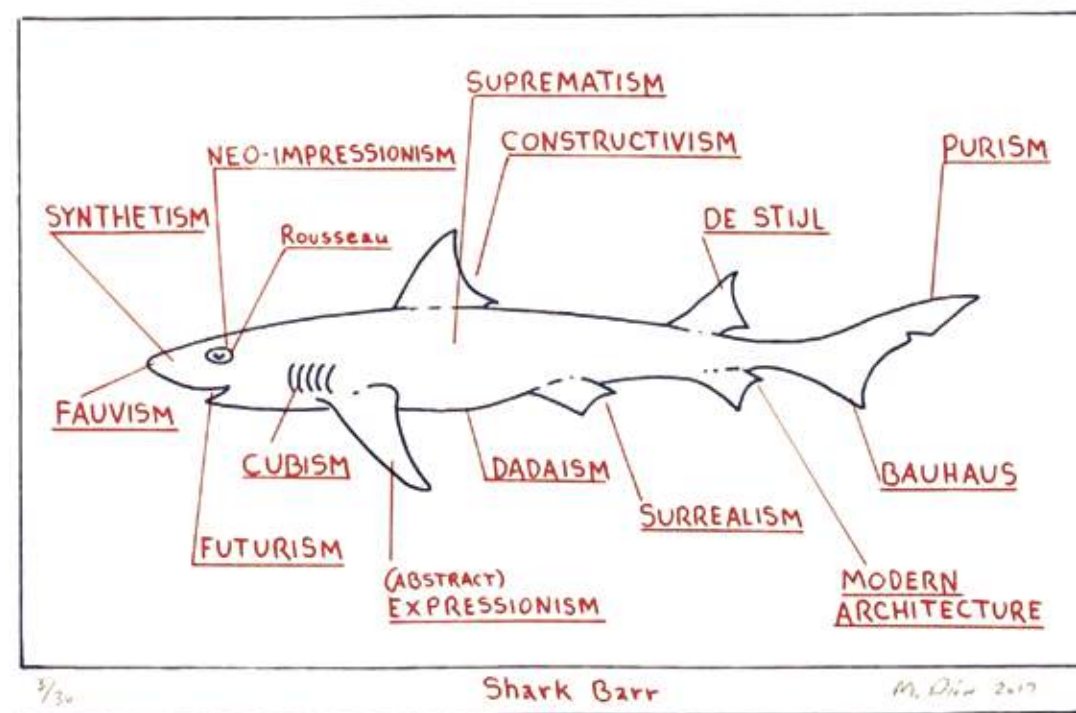
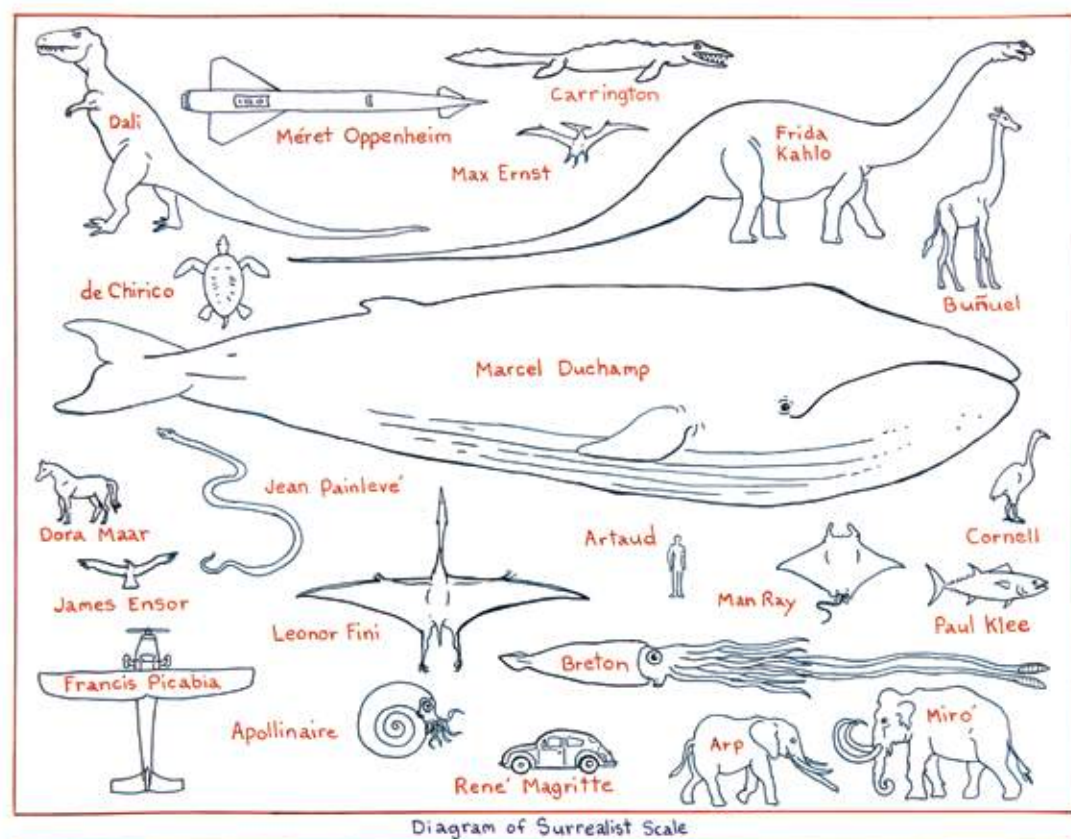




23/20 The Young Ichthyologist Al. Qasr 2016



72 Brontosaurus Al. Qasr 2016



- 1
Between Voltaire and Poe, 2016
Wooden furniture, cigar box, figurine, plastic, jars, bric-à-brac
208 × 147 × 25 cm
Courtesy the artist and Galerie In Situ – Fabienne Leclerc
- 2-5
Phylogenetic Trees, 2004
Series of 4 lithographs on bread and butter paper
Et in Arcadia Ego
Hic Existo Monstrum
Summum Bonum
Theatrum Universale
690 × 570 mm (x 4)
In collaboration with Robert Williams Courtesy the artists and Galerie In Situ – Fabienne Leclerc
- 6
Extinction Wallpaper
Printed wallpaper
Courtesy the artist
- 7
Sea Life, 2011
Wooden furniture, plastic objects and jars
170 × 175 × 37 cm
Courtesy the artist and Galerie In Situ – Fabienne Leclerc
- 8
The Fisheries, 2016
Paint, Aqua-Resin, rope, string, wood, nails
250 × 469 × 90 cm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 9
Against the Current, 2015
Resin, paint, baize, wood and glass display case
108,5 × 44,5 × 116 cm
Courtesy the artist and Galerie In Situ – Fabienne Leclerc
- 10
Trouble with Jellyfish, 2016
Printed wallpaper
Courtesy the artist
- 11
Cupboard of Natural Wonders, 2019
Mixed media
190 × 130 × 48 cm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 12
Cabinet of Marvels, 2019
Mixed media
190 × 130 × 48 cm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 13
The Amateur Naturalist (1980s), 2019
Mixed media
Cabinet: 190 × 130 × 48 cm
Figure: 190 × 70 × 45 cm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 14
The Natural Sciences, 2015
Sixteen fluorescent 3D printed objects, synthetic materials
Variable dimensions
Courtesy the artist and Waldburger Wouters
- 15
The Old Crow, 2016
Stuffed crow, books, costume jewellery and objects on wooden plinth
158 × 35 × 35 cm (with plinth)
Courtesy the artist and Galerie In Situ – Fabienne Leclerc
- 16
Bookstall – The Natural World, 2015
Wood, metal, lacquer, books, postcards, prints, drawings, cord, clothes-pegs
187 × 183,5 × 90 cm.
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 17
To Watch, to Cut, to Capture, to Kill, to Collect, 2019
Mixed media
- 205 × 330 × 70 cm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 18
Memory Box, 2019
Mixed media
220 × 310 × 30 cm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 19
An Archeology of Lost Objects, 2013
Archive cabinet, various found objects
100 × 109 × 63 cm
Courtesy the artist and Galerie In Situ – Fabienne Leclerc
- 20
300 Million Years of Flying, 2019
Sitespecific mural
Dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist
- 21
Rhinoceros Horn, 2014
Replica of rhinoceros horn, bitumen, flea market objects
60 × 64 × 64 cm
Liebelt Collection
- 22
The Medicine Cabinet of Mystery, 2013
Wooden shelf with door, various objects, key, ribbon, reproduction on cardboard
70 × 47 × 20 cm
Courtesy the artist and Galerie In Situ – Fabienne Leclerc
- 23
Field Station Honda - A project for FLORA, 2013
Red and blue pencil on paper
355 × 272 mm
Courtesy the artist and Galerie In Situ – Fabienne Leclerc
- 24
Heron, 2017
Blue and red color pencil on paper
- 260 × 137 mm
Courtesy the artist and Galerie In Situ – Fabienne Leclerc
- 25
SOS, 1998
Grey and blue pencil on paper
230 × 285 mm
Courtesy the artist and Galerie In Situ – Fabienne Leclerc
- 26
The Plush Snake, 2018
Watercolor and india ink on paper
With frame: 24,5 × 26 cm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 27
The Plush Snake, 2018
Color pencil on paper
257 × 285 mm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 28
List of Diminutive Objects, 2015
Color pencil on paper
With frame: 29 × 34,3 cm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 29
The Phantasmal Cabinet, 2016
Ink, collage, micron pen and highlighter on paper
With frame: 29 × 48,5 cm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 30
Concerned Hunting, 2017
Papercut
225 × 310 mm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 31
Bone Coral, 2017
Color pencil on paper
345 × 200 mm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 32
Phantom Archeology, 2015
Ink, collage, micron pen and highlighter on paper
140 × 410 mm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 33
The Crossroads, 1998
Indian ink on paper
280 × 255 mm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 34
Excavation (Flushing Meadows Corona Park), 2000
Color pencil on paper in two parts
300 × 220 mm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 35
Crocket (The Frontiersman at Home), 1999
Color pencil on paper
305 × 230 mm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 36
New England Digs- New Bedford Massachusetts, 2000
Color pencil on paper
340 × 260 mm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 37
Study of the Smart Museum Bug Hunt, 2000
Color pencil on paper
280 × 330 mm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 38
The Big Game Hunter at Home, 1992
Color pencil on paper
310 × 230 mm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 39
The Magpie, 2015
Color pencil on paper
205 × 155 mm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 40
Monster, 1998
Color pencil on paper
160 × 210 mm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 41
The Unicorn Horn, 2014
Color pencil on paper
230 × 205 mm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 42
The Twisted Harpoon, 2014
Color pencil on paper
130 × 180 mm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 43
The Bone Archive: The Academy of Things, 2014
Color pencil on paper
280 × 355 mm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 44
Cabinet - Equipment Locker, 2014
Color pencil on paper
280 × 280 mm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 45
Adventures in the Dark Museum (Zebra), 2014
Color pencil on paper
130 × 180 mm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 46
Naval Artifacts, 2014
Color pencil on paper
230 × 305 mm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 47
Gesellschaft der Amateur-Ornithologen Clubhaus, 2009
Watercolor on paper
150 × 150 mm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin
- 48
Floating History Laboratory Archaeology Field Station - History LAB, 2014
Color pencil on paper
125 × 175 mm
Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin

49
Buffalo Bayou-Invasive Plant Eradication Unit, 2011
 Color pencil on paper
 529 × 429 mm
 Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin

50
Wonder Workshop, 2014
 Color pencil on paper
 150 × 205 mm
 Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin

51
Invasive Plant Eradication Unit, 2008
 Color pencil on paper
 145 × 210 mm
 Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin

52
Jagdhütte (interior studies), 2000
 Color pencil on paper
 230 × 305 mm
 Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin

53
Ostrich Egg, 2014
 Felt pen on paper
 305 × 210 mm
 Mark Dion and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin

54-61
Miscallany Portfolio, 2016
 Portfolio of 8 prints
An Unruly Collection. The Wonder Workshop, 215 × 270 mm
The Hunter's Remorse, 210 × 250 mm
The Brontosaur, 160 × 210 mm
Ostrich in the Claw-foot Tub, 205 × 130 mm
Harpoons, 240 × 155 mm
The Bureaucrat, 220 × 280 mm
Between Voltaire and Poe, 238 × 232 mm
The Collector's Net: Insects and Arachnids, 230 × 295 mm
 Courtesy the artist

62
For Comparison of Scale, 2018
 Two-color etching
 293 × 378 mm
 Courtesy the artist

63-68
Griffelkunst Edition, 2014
 6 separate screen prints on paper
Palaeartic
Neotropical
Africotropical
Nearctic
The Aquatic Realm
The Aerial Realm
 400 × 300 mm (x 6)
 Courtesy the artist

69
The Young Ichthyologist, 2016
 Screen print on paper (AP 1/3)
 240 × 240 mm
 Courtesy the artist

70
Wunderkammer, 2015
 Digital print on paper
 200 × 155 mm
 Courtesy the artist

71
Shark Barr, 2017
 Screen print on paper (AP 1/5)
 230 × 330 mm
 Courtesy the artist

72
Brontosaurus, 2016
 Screen print on paper
 265 × 325 mm
 Courtesy the artist

73
A Guide to the Birds of Dada and Surrealism and their Influences, 2019
 Hand pulled two color screen print (1/50 AP)
 550 × 235 mm
 Courtesy the artist

74
Diagram of Surrealist Scale, 2019
 Color pencil on paper
 355 mm × 430 mm
 Courtesy the artist

cv mark dion

Born/født 1961 in/i New Bedford, Massachusetts. Lives and works in/bor og arbejder i Copake, New York

Education/uddannelse: Hartford Art School, University of Hartford, Connecticut, Whitney Museum of American Art's Independent Study Program and/og School of Visual Arts, New York.

Honorary titles/ærestitler: Honorary Fellow of Falmouth University, UK, and/og Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters (Ph.D.), The Wagner Free Institute of Science, Philadelphia.

Selected solo exhibitions/udvalgte soloudstillinger: *Mark Dion: Follies*, Storm King Sculpture Park (2019), *Theatre of the Natural World*, the Whitechapel Gallery, London (2018), *Misadventures of a 21st Century Naturalist*, the Institute of Contemporary Art Boston (2017), *ExtraNaturel: Voyage initiatique dans la collection des Beaux-Arts de Paris*, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Paris (2016), *Mark Dion: The Academy of Things*, The Academy of Fine Arts, Dresden (2014), *The Macabre Treasury*, Museum Het Domein, Sittard, The Netherlands (2013), *Oceanomania: Souvenirs of Mysterious Seas*, Musée Océanographique de Monaco & Nouveau Musée National de Monaco / Villa Paloma, Monaco (2011), *The Marvelous Museum: A Mark Dion Project*, Oakland Museum of California (2010-11), *Systema Metropolis*, Natural History Museum, London (2007), *The South Florida Wildlife Rescue Unit*, Miami Art Museum (2006), *Rescue Archaeology*, Museum of Modern Art, N.Y. (2004) and/og *Tate Thames Dig*, Tate Gallery, London (1999).

Mark Dion has also produced large scale permanent commissions for i.a./dertil kommer store, permanente installationer/udsmykninger til bl.a. Documenta 13, Kassel, Germany, The Montevideo Biennale, Uruguay, The Rose Art Museum, Johns Hopkins University and/og the Port of Los Angeles.

Mark Dion has received numerous awards, including/Dion har modtaget adskillige priser, herunder: the ninth annual Larry Aldrich Foundation Award (2001), The Joan Mitchell Foundation Award (2007), and the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Lucida Art Award (2008).

Director and art historian Inge Merete Kjeldgaard — Inge Merete Kjeldgaard is the director of Esbjerg Art Museum. Here she has worked with the development of the exhibition as a medium through a variety of experimental exhibition projects, and she has initiated and contributed to a research programme on audience experiences that is an integral part of the museum mediation efforts. IMK has also initiated basic research projects situated in the matrix between natural sciences and visual art, and she has taken the initiative to a number of cross-aesthetic, cross-institutional and transdisciplinary development projects. IMK is the author of numerous articles on contemporary art and the research of Esbjerg Art Museum, published in anthologies and journals, and she is the editor of the museum's publications and its journal.

Curator and art historian Christiane Finsen — Christiane Finsen is a curator at Esbjerg Art Museum. Here she has curated numerous exhibitions, she has contributed to and edited a number of exhibition publications, and she has been deeply involved in the implementation of the results of the museum's practice-oriented research projects into subsequent exhibitions and mediation initiatives. At the moment Christiane Finsen is working on a research project which rethinks the museum as a potential catalyst of the integration between art and reality.

(DK)

Museumsdirektør, mag.art. Inge Merete Kjeldgaard — Inge Merete Kjeldgaard er magister i kunsthistorie og direktør for Esbjerg Kunstmuseum. Her har hun bl.a. arbejdet med at udvikle udstillingen som medium i forskellige eksperimenterende udstillingsprojekter, iværksat og bidraget til et forskningsprogram i publikums oplevelser, som er integreret i museets formidlingsvirksomhed, igangsat kunstneriske grundforskningsprojekter i krydsfeltet mellem naturvidenskab og billedkunst og været initiativtager til en række tværfaglige og tværinstitutionelle udviklingsprojekter. Har skrevet artikler om samtidskunst og om museets forskning til antologier og tidsskrifter, og redigerer museets publikationer og tidsskrift.

Museumsinspektør, mag.art. Christiane Finsen — Christiane Finsen er magister i kunsthistorie og siden 2001 museumsinspektør på Esbjerg Kunstmuseum. Her har hun kurateret talrige udstillinger samt bidraget til og redigeret en række udstillingspublikationer. Har desuden været direkte involveret i arbejdet med at implementere resultaterne af museets anvendelsesorienterede forskningsprojekter i efterfølgende udstillinger og formidlingstiltag. Arbejder pt. på et forskningsprojekt, der gentænker museet som mulig katalysator for integrationen af kunst og virkelighed.

A publication by / udgivet af

ESBJERG KUNSTMUSEUM / Esbjerg Art Museum
on the occasion of the exhibition / i forbindelse med udstillingen

Mark Dion: Wunderkammer 2 — mirabilia

05.10.2019-08.03.2020

EXHIBITION / Udstilling

Concept and project management / koncept og projektledelse: Christiane Finsen, Inge Merete Kjeldgaard
Curators / kuratering: Mark Dion, Christiane Finsen, Inge Merete Kjeldgaard

Exhibition design / udstillingsarkitektur: Christiane Finsen, Inge Merete Kjeldgaard

Project coordination / organisering: Birgitte Ørom

Mediation / formidling: Christiane Finsen, Inge Merete Kjeldgaard

Mural painting / vægmaleri: Nathan Catlin

Wallpaper production / produktion af tapet: Guillaume Blanc

Educational programme and workshops / undervisning og workshops: Birgitte Ørom, Diana Boholm

PR: Christiane Finsen

Exhibition construction / udstillingsopbygning: Lean Pedersen in cooperation with Jens Ytzen ApS
and Tjæreborg Malerforretning

Light / lys: Lumiere, Lindpro, Esbjerg Kommune, Musikhuset Esbjerg

Graphical profile / grafisk profil: Rasmus Eckardt, Anne Lotte Grønbæk

PUBLICATION / Publikation

Editors / redaktion: Christiane Finsen, Inge Merete Kjeldgaard

Translation and language revision / oversættelse og sproglig revision: Karsten Gramkow

List of works / værkfortegnelse: Birgitte Ørom

Photo / foto: All images © Mark Dion, p. 21 (14): Isabelle Arthuis; p. 22 (1), pp. 28-29 (8, 10), p. 30 (7): Rory Conaty for installation images at Hugh Lane Gallery; pp. 24-27 (2-5), p. 31 (9), p. 36 (15), p. 41 (19), p. 45 (22), p. 47 (24-25): Galerie In Situ – Fabienne Leclerc; pp. 32-35 (11-13), p. 37 (16), pp. 38-39 (17), p. 44 (21), pp. 48-60 (50, 27-35, 38, 36, 39, 41-43, 45, 44, 46-53): Galerie Nagel Draxler Cologne/Berlin; p. 40 (18), pp. 61-63 (60, 63-69, 72), p. 65 (71): Tanya Bonakdar Gallery New York/Los Angeles; pp. 42-43 (20): Otto Saxinger; p. 46 (23): Raphael Fanelli; p. 64 (74): Torben E. Meyer

Layout: Rasmus Eckardt, Anne Lotte Grønbæk

Print / tryk: Sangill Grafisk

Print run / oplag: 2000

ISBN 978-87-89311-43-2

Printed in Denmark 2019 / trykt i Danmark 2019

© Esbjerg Art Museum, the artist, and the photographers / Esbjerg Kunstmuseum, kunstneren
og fotograferne

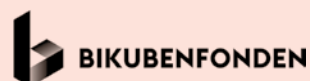
Esbjerg Art Museum / Esbjerg Kunstmuseum

Havnegade 20

6700 Esbjerg

www.eskum.dk

Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Joachim / under protektion af HKH Prins Joachim



For the Wunderkammer project (2018-2020) the Esbjerg Art Museum was awarded The Bikuben Foundation's *Vision Exhibition Award 2017* / Bikubenfonden tildelte Esbjerg Kunstmuseum *Udstillingsprisen Vision 2017* for projekt *Wunderkammer* (2018-2020).

The exhibition was made possible through generous support from The Bikuben Foundation, The Augustinus Foundation, Jens Ytzen ApS, and Tjæreborg Malerforretning / Udstillingen er støttet af Bikubenfonden, Augustinus Fonden, Jens Ytzen ApS og Tjæreborg Malerforretning.

The works in the booklet were reproduced in compliance with the Danish copyright laws / kunstværkerne i udgivelsen er gengivet med hjemmel i aftalelicensbestemmelserne i opretshavslovens § 24a. Museet har gjort sit yderste for at sikre copyright.



