

Re-thinking the Curiosity Cabinet:  
A Study of Visual Representation in Early and Post Modernity

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This thesis examines the concepts and visual strategies employed within the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century curiosity cabinet – here defined as privately-owned European collections of extraordinary objects – to represent the world. This research also examines how these concepts and strategies are paralleled in contemporary art practice from 1990 to the present in Europe and the USA. As such, it challenges traditional museological interpretations of the cabinet as a mere proto-museum, as well as the notion that the cabinet is obsolete as a form of cultural practice.

This thesis primarily focuses upon Northern European collecting practice from *c.* 1540 - *c.* 1660, and draws upon artworks, objects and collections as illustrative examples. The thesis also offers a new translation of parts of a seminal text in the history of early collections: Samuel Quiccheberg's *Inscriptiones Vel Tituli Theatri Amplissimi* (1565), included in the Appendix.

During the last two decades, there has been a resurgence of scholarly interest in the cabinet, yet perspectives on early collections remain limited – often to a single interpretive lens. Furthermore, scholarship on the nature of the cabinet's connections with and relevance to contemporary cultural practice is still in its infancy.

This thesis contends that the cabinet is best understood as a complex set of practices, related to but distinct from those of contemporary museums, and draws upon the Derridean concept of the spectre in order to demonstrate how the cabinet's practices are echoed within contemporary art practice at both a visual and conceptual level.

Ultimately, this thesis contributes a new historiography, theoretical perspective and methodological approach to the early modern cabinet, one which sets it in an appropriate historical context, but also considers the nature of its significance in the contemporary era.

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*In memory of my Grandma, Eileen Winifred Bowry (1928-2011),  
whose cabinet remains a source of endless fascination.*

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## Introduction

What does it mean to follow a ghost? And what if this came down to being *followed by it*, always, persecuted [...] by the very chase we are leading?

Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 1994 <sup>1</sup>

To revise Karl Marx, a spectre is haunting the museum.<sup>2</sup> Long considered an obsolete cultural practice by historians of the museum,<sup>3</sup> the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century curiosity cabinet has exerted a powerful influence upon contemporary art practice during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. As privately-owned collections of extraordinary objects, from natural specimens to paintings, cabinets are often described as the ‘precursors’ to contemporary museums.<sup>4</sup> Yet, despite sharing certain commonalities with the museum, cabinets operated according to different principles of organisation, display and interpretation, and were both conceived and received in entirely different historical, social and cultural contexts. Today, not only has the idea of the cabinet been re-appropriated by the museum, an institution which once sought to distance itself both

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<sup>1</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf, ed. by Bernd Magnus and Stephen Cullenberg (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), p. 10 (my emphasis).

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Communist Manifesto: A Modern Edition*, trans. by Samuel Moore (London and New York: Verso, 1998 [1888]), p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> See Arthur MacGregor, *Curiosity and Enlightenment: Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007) who presents a linear taxonomy of historical ‘museum types’ (p. 237), which lead to the modern ‘museum movement’ (p. x).

<sup>4</sup> This idea originates with historians of the museum, but is generally found, and still prevalent. See Mark Meadow, ‘Introduction’, in *The First Treatise on Museums: Samuel Quiccheberg’s Inscriptiones, 1565*, ed. by Mark Meadow and Bruce Robertson (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2013), pp. 1 and 37.



physically and intellectually from the early modern collection,<sup>5</sup> but it has also become increasingly prevalent as a subject of study, critical tool and *modus operandi* for contemporary artists, predominately within the realms of assemblage, installation and conceptual art.

This thesis examines how the curiosity cabinet was deployed as a means of representing the world during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In particular, it investigates some of the key concepts to which collectors subscribed, and how these were expressed through the use of visual forms and strategies. It also explores how and to what extent these forms and strategies are reflected in and paralleled by contemporary art practice.

This introductory section introduces the focus, parameters and scope of the research. Following a brief overview of the origins of and rationale behind the research project, I outline the nature and focus of the research, followed by the research questions, aim and objectives. The next section discusses the theoretical approach and methodology which have underpinned and driven the research project, as well as the nature of its contribution to original knowledge. The final section introduces the core thesis argument and thesis structure.

This research project began with a museological conundrum, prompted by a work of contemporary art. During the summer of 2009, French-born artist Gérard Mermoz (1947- ) displayed a number of discrete works which together were conceived by the artist as a contemporary ‘cabinet of curiosities’ at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, in an exhibition

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<sup>5</sup> Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 2.

entitled ‘Objects in Performance’ (Figure 1). The centrepiece of this exhibition was a large glass-fronted wooden display case whose partitions disclosed a seemingly incongruous array of artificial objects from a wide variety of regions, cultures and epochs. The objects, which ranged from the hand-crafted to the mass-produced, the sacred to the profane, the sublime to the banal, ‘high’ to ‘low’ culture, and included a statue of the Hindu god Hanuman as well as a plastic spray bottle, were juxtaposed in groups and in pairs. The selection, location and juxtaposition of these figures were intended to convey variegated notions of intercultural and historic encounters and dialogues and, in particular, to highlight the tensions and inequalities in the power relationships between cultures.<sup>6</sup> Further pairs of objects transgressed the boundaries of the physical cabinet and subtly infiltrated the museum’s permanent displays in an act of curatorial *détournement*.<sup>7</sup>

The purpose of this (temporary) exhibition was twofold: as institutional critique it challenged the traditional taxonomies of the museum and invited visitors to consider the relationships between different objects, cultures and ideas, rather than viewing these as isolated elements, and between these and collecting and curatorial practices. However, as a work which explored alternative methods of interpretation and display, it also arguably operated on a deeper, epistemic level which, in the artist’s own words, explored ‘the capacity of art to make a contribution to knowledge’. Nevertheless, Mermoz’s cabinets

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<sup>6</sup> Mermoz, *Objects in Performance*, p. 7, and pp. 14-15.

<sup>7</sup> Emrah Irzik defines *détournement* as the practice of ‘inscribing new meanings on previously existing cultural objects for the purpose of critique’. See Irzik, ‘A Proposal for Grounded Cultural Activism: Communication Strategies, Adbusters and Social Change’, in *Cultural Activism: Practices, Dilemmas, and Possibilities*, ed. by Begüm Özden Firat and Aylin Kuryel (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011 [2010]), pp. 137-155 (p. 145).

may also be interpreted as just one iteration of an emerging trend in the late twentieth-and early twenty-first-century museum – to reclaim the curiosity cabinet as part of its own evolutionary genealogy.



**Figure 1:**

**Mermoz's installation in the first-floor Didcot Case, Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, 2009. While this artwork has the appearance of a single, unified element, it comprises four distinct artistic projects: *Histoires* (top and middle shelves), *Bestiaries* (second shelf from bottom), *The Great Family of Man* (second shelf from top) and *Museographies* (bottom shelf), and thus four different modes of interpreting objects. Photograph by kind permission of and © Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford. Artwork © Gérard Mermoz.**



**Figure 2:**

**A detail of Mermoz's Didcot case installation. On the extreme left of the middle shelf is the 36<sup>th</sup> composition in Mermoz's *Histoires* series, entitled *Hanuman.Capuchin*. This juxtaposition recalls the meeting of two faiths: Christianity and Hinduism, and the subjugation of the latter by the former during India's period of colonisation. Photograph by kind permission of and © Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford. Artwork © Gérard Mermoz.**

Previously alerted to a rising tendency to experiment with older forms of display and interpretation in the contemporary museum through the completion of a Masters dissertation on the use of eighteenth-century modes of interpretation in three contemporary London museums,<sup>8</sup> chancing upon the Pitt Rivers cabinet raised a number of important questions for the researcher, and furnished the initial inspiration and impetus for this research project.

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<sup>8</sup> These comprised The British Museum's Enlightenment Gallery, Sir John Soane's Museum and Dennis Severs' House. See Stephanie Bowry, *The Space Between: The Reconstruction of Eighteenth-Century Britain in Three Museums of the Twenty-First Century* (unpublished dissertation submitted for the degree of MA Museum Studies, University of Leicester, 2009).

In order to understand the historical context of the eighteenth-century museum, it had been necessary to briefly investigate the world of the seventeenth-century cabinet. On viewing Mermoz's installation, therefore, it was striking that the artist's chosen vehicle of expression, the curiosity cabinet, was frequently conceptualised in histories of the museum as an obsolescent forerunner of contemporary public institutions, the whimsical fruit of an 'irredeemable quaintness'.<sup>9</sup> Why, then, had it been increasingly referenced, appropriated and re-fashioned over the past three decades by the museum, and by contemporary artists in particular? In order to answer this question, it would be necessary to examine specific aspects of artistic practice as they are seen to operate in two seemingly remote epochs and contexts – the world of the early modern curiosity cabinet and that of contemporary art.

## **Research focus**

This research is predominately qualitative, theoretical and visual in nature, and rests upon a broad historical foundation which investigates some of the many incarnations of the cabinet in Northern European collecting practice between *c.* 1540 - *c.* 1660. Specifically, the research draws upon germane examples of collections and collecting practice from Germany, the Netherlands and Northern Italy, among the epicentres of cabinet production during this period, as well as from England, where cabinet-style collecting was rather slower to develop than on the continent.<sup>10</sup> The contemporary focus is, naturally, more

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<sup>9</sup> MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> Ken Arnold, *Cabinets for the Curious: Looking Back at Early English Museums* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 13-23.

narrowly circumscribed, and examines artworks produced in Europe and the United States between 1990 and the present.

This thesis is not organised around case studies, but instead deploys key themes for investigation which draw upon a variety of illustrative examples. This research thus presents a study of part of a complex network of practices across cultures and time in order to demonstrate – primarily to historians of the museum, but also to art historians – the variety and multiplicity of methods by which the cabinet may be approached, and its continued relevance within contemporary cultures of display.

As a result, this thesis draws upon a diverse range of historical and contemporary sources, from surviving historical collections, objects and images, to documents and works of art. The researcher is well aware of the risks of reductionism and caricature inherent in this undertaking. While I have endeavoured to avoid simplifying or conflating diverse forms of cultural practice performed in different historical, cultural, social and geographical contexts – for example, Dutch paintings of the seventeenth century and German cabinets of the sixteenth century – it is important to note that no form of cultural practice exists in a vacuum. Early modern collectors visited (and commented upon) each other's collections,<sup>11</sup> exchanged objects, corresponded with each other,<sup>12</sup> published and read catalogues and

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<sup>11</sup> See the English diarist and collector John Evelyn's visit to the collection of Dr John Bargrave on 13 May 1672 in Stephen Bann, *Under the Sign: John Bargrave as Collector, Traveler, and Witness* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), pp. 1-3.

<sup>12</sup> See Paula Findlen, 'Inventing Nature: Commerce, Art, and Science in the Early Modern Cabinet of Curiosities', in *Merchants and Marvels: Commerce, Science, and Art in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Pamela H. Smith and Paula Findlen (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), p. 299.

inventories of collections<sup>13</sup> and commissioned and consumed images of objects and collections.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, collectors inhabited a world populated with objects produced in other countries – the most fashionable pieces of display furniture in seventeenth-century England, for example, were typically German or Dutch, and later, French.<sup>15</sup>

While the author acknowledges that there are indeed certain similarities between the cabinet and the museum, as well as a shared etymological history which is addressed in Chapter One, this thesis contends that both constitute the material cultural expressions of a conceptual shift in how the world was perceived and understood through the arrangement of objects in space. As a result, whether or not the cabinet and the museum are interpreted as historically distinct entities, it is vital that each be studied in accordance with their temporal and other contexts, which informed the development of the practices and modes of operation particular to each.

This thesis argues that the history, production and consumption of art and the curiosity cabinet of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were deeply entwined. While the cabinet is often understood as a ‘new’ means of interpreting and displaying the world through objects and their relationships at the start of the sixteenth century,<sup>16</sup> collectors necessarily drew upon much earlier practices in order to construct meaning and so build their own

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<sup>13</sup> Findlen offers a useful discussion of early modern catalogues of collections, including how these served to enhance the status of the collector, and how catalogues differed from inventories. See Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 36-44.

<sup>14</sup> Ulisse Aldrovandi employed a number of full-time artists to record objects in his extensive collection of natural specimens in Bologna. See Findlen, *Possessing Nature*, p. 18.

<sup>15</sup> See Reinier Baarsen, *17<sup>th</sup>-Century Cabinets* (Amsterdam: Waanders Publishers, Rijksmuseum, 2000).

<sup>16</sup> MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 10.

idiosyncratic version of reality. The physical arrangement of the cabinet was thus shaped by older forms of aesthetic display from the classical world and medieval era, together with interpretive devices borrowed from realms as diverse as those of art, literature, natural philosophy and cosmology.<sup>17</sup> The thesis also contends that the concepts and practices of the cabinet are also apparent in contemporary art, and at a more subtle level than the purely visual and referential.

## **Research questions, aim and objectives**

This thesis investigates the following question:

How, and to what extent, are the concepts and strategies of visual representation present in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century curiosity cabinet also present in the work of contemporary artists using the cabinet as a framing device?

The primary aim of this research project has been to interrogate and revise the canonistic interpretation of the early modern cabinet in museological discourse, and, in so doing, arrive at a deeper understanding of the curiosity cabinet and how it operated in the cultural context of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This thesis contends that the cabinet is best understood not as an embryonic museum from which the contemporary museum and gallery inexorably sprang, but as the historical and cultural product of the Renaissance and

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<sup>17</sup> See Stephen Bann, 'Shrines, Curiosities, and the Rhetoric of Display', in *Visual Display: Culture Beyond Appearances*, ed. by Lynne Cooke and Peter Wollen (New York: The New Press, 1995), Stephen Campbell, 'Mantegna's Parnassus: Reading, Collecting and the Studiolo', in *Revaluing Renaissance Art*, ed. by Gabrielle Neher and Rupert Shepherd (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), Arnold, *Cabinets for the Curious*, MacGregor, *Curiosity*, and Findlen, *Possessing Nature*.



the Baroque respectively. As such, the cabinet was subject to fundamentally different modes of representation, which require a more sympathetic, contextualised lens than that of the post-Enlightenment museum. For, as Stephen Bann, Douglas Crimp and others have observed, while physical objects and collections formerly belonging to cabinets were often assimilated into the collections of the late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century museum, it does not necessarily follow that the paradigms of knowledge and the cultural practices to which they belonged migrated with them.<sup>18</sup> Part of this aim has also been to compare the representational practices of the sixteenth-and seventeenth-century cabinet with those of contemporary artists, in order to understand if shared logics, aesthetic dispositions and discourses exist. This research therefore works towards the construction of a new theoretical position and lens on both the cabinet and contemporary art, situated within their wider cultural contexts. This thesis does not seek to equate historical practices and concepts with contemporary ones, but rather to understand how and to what extent each world may be harnessed in order to illuminate the other.

The research aim above has been pursued through a number of smaller objectives, which have investigated specific aspects of early modern and contemporary art practice. Their role has been to establish the vital context in which both forms of representative practice operate, and to draw fruitful comparisons between culturally-and historically-situated aspects of these practices. They have also allowed the researcher to experiment with different kinds of theoretical perspectives on the idea of the cabinet. These objectives, here articulated as questions, are as follows:

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<sup>18</sup> Stephen Bann, *Under the Sign*, p. 9, and Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), p. 225.

1. How far does Samuel Quiccheberg's 1565 treatise furnish a viable conceptual framework for interpreting the early modern cabinet?
2. How was the cabinet related to other forms of early modern visual culture which relied upon practices of framing and assemblage, such as triptychs and perspective boxes?
3. How and to what extent did the historical cabinet draw upon the composition, iconography and symbolism of the early modern 'still life' painting, in particular that of the *vanitas*?
4. How have contemporary artists such as Mark Dion, Peter Blake and Damien Hirst interpreted or reproduced aspects of the cabinet in their work?

In particular, my intention has been to build a wider picture of the cultural and intellectual milieu in which the cabinet operated, with a particular focus on how the cabinet was related to other forms of early modern visual culture.

The curiosity cabinet was prolific as well as diverse in its conception, methods and scope, and subject to individual tastes and predilections as well as changing perceptions of the world and how it could best be interpreted and understood. Thus, while it will not be possible to encapsulate every variation on cabinets of curiosity as they developed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this thesis outlines the major *modi operandi* of a selection of different types of collection which existed in Europe at this time.

Ultimately, this research seeks to re-open historical, cultural and especially museological debate on the nature of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century cabinet, and to offer some reflections upon the nature of its resonance and continued relevance in contemporary

discourse and cultural performance. The conclusion reached is that the cabinet operated as a complex arbiter of meaning during the early modern period, whose influence is still felt today, on a profound epistemic level.

## **The research design**

As befits the field of Museum Studies, this research is interdisciplinary in nature, combining historical and historiographical methods with methods drawn from the history and philosophy of art. The research has also been influenced by visual culture studies, phenomenology and, to a lesser degree, sociology. As such, this thesis does not rely upon any one theory, model or framework, and while it draws upon a number of interconnected ideas, it has also served to construct its own synthesis of methods and theories.

Research which crosses traditional disciplinary boundaries arguably lends itself to analyses of complex practices about which knowledge is seen to be ‘partial, transient, multi-layered and coming from many perspectives’.<sup>19</sup> As a complex social and cultural phenomenon, the historical cabinet demands a methodological approach which is capable of handling the many diverse and interconnected elements which it comprised, as well as the contexts in which it was constructed and performed.

While interdisciplinarity exists alongside other, closely related terms such as multidisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, social theorist Andrew Barry and anthropologist Georgina Born identify three distinct modes of interdisciplinary research practice. These

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<sup>19</sup> Catherine Manathunga, ‘Post-colonial Perspectives on Interdisciplinary Researcher Identities’, in *Academic Research and Researchers*, ed. by Angela Brew and Lisa Lucas (Maidenhead and New York: Open University Press, 2009), pp.131-145 (p. 131).

practices are articulated as ‘integrative-synthesis’, in which modes of analysis are drawn from two or more disciplines, ‘subordination-service’, in which subordinate disciplines make up for a perceived shortcoming within a chosen ‘master’ discipline and ‘agonistic-antagonistic’.<sup>20</sup> In this third approach, interdisciplinarity ‘springs from a self-conscious dialogue with, criticism of or opposition to the limits of established disciplines, or the status of academic research or instrumental knowledge production’, as well as ‘a commitment or desire to contest or transcend the given epistemological and/or ontological assumptions of specific historical disciplines’.<sup>21</sup> This research project combines elements from all three modes, but originates and is driven by the third. In this manner, the thesis constructs not only a history of a cultural practice and the nature of its relationship with the practices of another era, but also a historiography which furnishes a means of probing, problematising and critiquing existing approaches to the cabinet, particularly within established narratives of museum history.

Moreover, as a comparative history, this thesis also seeks to demonstrate the continued cultural relevance of the curiosity cabinet, and does not posit it, as Mieke Bal observes in her semiotic examination of the work of Caravaggio (1571-1610) and its resonances in contemporary art practice, as an isolated element ‘in a remote past, buried under concerns

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<sup>20</sup> Andrew Barry and Georgina Born, ‘Interdisciplinarity: Reconfigurations of the Social and Natural Sciences’, in *Interdisciplinarity: Reconfigurations of the Social and Natural Sciences*, ed. by Andrew Barry and Georgina Born (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 1-56 (pp. 10-12).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

we do not share’.<sup>22</sup> In embarking upon such a high-contrast comparative study, however, a greater degree of methodological complexity ensues. In drawing upon the methods of other disciplines, the researcher acknowledges that this approach is highly selective, but this should not suggest that such engagement is superficial in nature. Rather, it facilitates a far more subtle understanding of cultural practices while allowing the researcher to reflect upon the strengths and limitations of her own disciplinary background.

As a piece of historical research, this project is also strongly influenced by interpretivist thought and practice. As sociologist Norman Blaikie explains, Interpretivism takes its point of departure from the point of view of the social actors engaged in a particular activity. Here, ‘social reality is regarded as the product of its inhabitants; it is a world that is interpreted by the meanings participants produce and reproduce as a necessary part of their everyday activities together’.<sup>23</sup> Hence, the researcher’s particular concern with establishing context, in particular how early modern collectors *thought about* their collections, and how they used them to *think with*, using textual analysis as well as the examination of material objects and images in order to investigate the historical systems of belief to which collectors subscribed.

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<sup>22</sup> Mieke Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio: Contemporary Art, Preposterous History* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 13. See also Robert Harbison’s comparative study of Baroque architecture and its influence in the twentieth century. Harbison, ‘Baroque in the Twentieth Century’, in *Reflections on Baroque* (London: Reaktion, 2000), pp. 222-240.

<sup>23</sup> Norman Blaikie, *Designing Social Research: The Logic of Anticipation*, 2nd edn (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2009), p. 99.

## *Theoretical framework*

One of the greatest challenges which confronts the scholar of the early modern cabinet is how best to understand and effectively frame these collections given their sheer prolificacy, variety and idiosyncratic nature. Without a theoretical framework, no study, however thorough, can penetrate more than the most superficial levels of meaning, but in developing a lens, there is a risk of imposing a system of order onto the cabinet which never, in fact, existed. Within this study, multiple lenses are deployed, both in order to study different aspects of visual practice within specific temporal and spatial contexts, and to reflect upon the nature and effectiveness of each lens in turn.

This thesis is influenced to a certain extent by deconstructivist thinking, which, like historiography, is concerned with ‘looking into how truths are produced’.<sup>24</sup> During the earliest phase of the project, the researcher considered deploying a case study approach which would have examined one or two historical collections and contemporary works of art in detail. However, the curiosity cabinet revealed itself to be diverse and idiosyncratic in its manifestations – even within the same cabinet, which arguably produced endless different versions of itself in various formats – through collections, images, catalogues and inventories,<sup>25</sup> that selecting a single case study would have been extremely problematic. A different approach was needed, and the methodology developed from a holistic case study approach in the planning stages to a more complex, thematic model which sought to

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<sup>24</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, cited in Anne D’Alleva, *Methods and Theories of Art History* (London: Laurence King, 2005 [1995]), p. 143.

<sup>25</sup> MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 25, and Maria Zytaruk, ‘Cabinets of Curiosities and the Organization of Knowledge’, in *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 80.1 (2011), 1-23, (p. 7).

dismantle and reassemble historical and ‘contemporary’ cabinets from their component parts.

In particular, this thesis draws upon philosopher Jacques Derrida’s notion of hauntology, and the spectre, as set out in his 1994 commentary on Karl Marx’s deployment of ghosts and spirits in *The Communist Manifesto*, and other works.<sup>26</sup> Derrida’s spectre, or revenant – literally, ‘that which comes back’<sup>27</sup> – describes the reappearance of an old idea in a new body. The spectre is its physical manifestation, but its corporeal form is always animated by the spirit of the idea. However, in order to apprehend the reappearance of the past in the present, Derrida argues, the scholar must endeavour ‘to ontologise [the] remains, to make them present, in the first place by identifying the bodily remains and by localising the dead’,<sup>28</sup> in other words, by (re)placing the spectre in its historical context. While abstract in nature, these philosophical ideas have furnished the researcher with both a useful language of discourse and a way of seeing, shaping the researcher’s perspectives on how early modern practices may be seen to be paralleled in contemporary art.

Derrida’s theory of the *parergon* and the *ergon*, as set out in *The Truth in Painting* (1987), and based on a critique of Immanuel Kant, has also proved useful in examining both the cabinet and contemporary art. Here, Derrida describes how the work of art, or *ergon*, is inseparable from its frame, the *parergon*, but that this frame may assume many forms,

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<sup>26</sup> Derrida, *Specters of Marx*.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

some of them unknown to the interpreter.<sup>29</sup> The frame is integral to our understanding of a work of art because it defines precisely how we are to approach it in the first place.

However, in the case of the cabinet, many of these early collections have been destroyed or dispersed, and their material fragments are therefore lacking the essential context or frame which once made them meaningful. Even in the case of well-preserved collections such as that of Canon John Bargrave (1610-1680), few collections of this type can be seen or experienced quite as they would have been in the time in which they were created. Any study of the cabinet is therefore to a significant extent not only an act of resurrection, but of re-framing these collections within an approximation of their original parameters. This thesis therefore constructs a visual methodology which problematises the contemporary production of knowledge about the cabinet, but also explores visual research practices as a subject of study in their own right.<sup>30</sup>

### *Field research*

While much of this research was desk-based, field research in the form of visits to museums, galleries and archives was also conducted at twelve institutions in the UK, and at one institution in Sweden. These visits investigated specific objects and collections, but also observed exhibitionary practices of interpretation and display. Visits were planned in stages in accordance with the wider research aims and objectives, and as such may be

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<sup>29</sup> Jacques Derrida, trans. by Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod, 'Parergon', in *The Truth in Painting* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 15-147 (p. 73).

<sup>30</sup> For a discussion of the 'practice turn' in visual research methodologies, see Sarah Pink, 'Advances in Visual Methodology: An Introduction', in Sarah Pink, ed., *Advances in Visual Methodology* (London: SAGE, 2012), pp. 3-16 (p. 11).



divided into three categories: contextual, specific and exploratory. This section will consider each category in turn, with a brief summary of the key visits within each category and their individual objectives. It will then examine the methods of field research employed, with a particular focus upon phenomenology, before considering the problematic nature of the surviving evidence for historical cabinets and how this affected the development of the research methodology.

The first series of visits took place during the period June-August 2011, and investigated collecting and its contexts in the early modern era. Their threefold objective was firstly to broaden the researcher's understanding of the nature of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century cabinets: their architectural structure, components, iconography and contents, and secondly, to assess the correlations between art and collecting activity during the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Finally, these visits observed the different ways in which curators had chosen to display and interpret cabinets and works of art coeval with their production.

These early contextual visits included visits to the National Gallery to examine Dutch still life and perspective paintings in June 2011, to the British Galleries and the Renaissance and Medieval Galleries at the Victoria and Albert Museum (hereafter V&A) in August 2011 to examine the structure and iconography of furniture designed to house collections, as well as objects from the collections of Isabella d'Este of Mantua and Rudolf II of Prague, and examples of early modern and late medieval material culture including early modern writing desks and medieval triptychs. Two further visits in August 2011 were conducted in order to view objects formerly belonging to the Tradescants' collection at the Garden Museum, Lambeth, as well as the Tradescants' tomb, and to view medieval reliquaries at

the British Museum exhibition ‘Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics and Devotion in Medieval Europe’. A later, supplementary visit was made to the Holburne Museum, Bath, to view an exhibition of thirteen early modern cabinets in December 2012.<sup>31</sup>

More in-depth and tightly focussed visits, investigating specific early modern collections, were carried out at both this, and at later stages. The seventeenth-century collection of John Bargrave, whose objects, often complete with their original parchment labels, are preserved in three cabinets in the archives of Canterbury Cathedral, was explored in August 2011. This visit comprised an examination of objects, labels, furniture and a transcription of Bargrave’s catalogue. The best-preserved and most complex example of a miniature curiosity cabinet, the 1631 Augsburg Art Cabinet at the Museum Gustavianum, University of Uppsala, Sweden, was visited in June 2012, for the purposes of viewing and examining the nature of both the surviving objects and the cabinet itself with a particular focus upon its physical structure and iconographical programme.

The third series of visits initially focussed upon identifying works of contemporary art which emulated the cabinet, and took place over a much longer period of time, as the focus of the research was gradually narrowed down to specific areas of enquiry. Some of these early visits were also contextual in nature, and sought to apprehend contemporary art as a cultural practice more broadly, considering its visual components, materials, construction, scope, preoccupations and tropes, as well as its interpretation. This included a visit to the Tate Modern in January 2012 to examine both works of modern and contemporary art, and

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<sup>31</sup> ‘Secret Splendour: The Hidden World of Baroque Cabinets’, Holburne Museum, Bath, 27 October 2012 to 6 January 2013.

the manner of their display and interpretation, and to the Small Collections Room at Nottingham Contemporary to view an ongoing series of contemporary artists' work presented in miniature cabinets of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, to which the researcher's first visit was in November 2010. Later visits examined specific artworks and exhibitions which emerged as being of particular interest, including Mark Dion's permanent installation, *Bureau of the Centre for the Study of Surrealism and its Legacy* (2005), at Manchester Museum in November 2011, an exhibition of works by Damien Hirst and still life paintings by early modern and contemporary artists including Gavin Turk and Matt Collishaw at the New Art Gallery, Walsall, in March 2013, works by Peter Blake at the inaugural Art13 art fair at the Kensington Olympia in London in March 2013, and *Curiosity: Art and the Pleasures of Knowing* at the Turner Contemporary, Margate, in September 2013.

### *Phenomenological and abstract data*

The visits outlined above relied upon personal observation of and reflection upon material objects *in situ* within a larger collection, with a particular view to identifying what Antonio Somaini, following Bal, has articulated as 'practices of looking'.<sup>32</sup> This research method is also practiced within the field of visual culture, and as Walker and Chaplin observe, it does not limit itself to one form or type of material object, but instead focuses upon the shared

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<sup>32</sup> Somaini, 'Art History', p. 21.

visual characteristics of objects, even those constructed in very different media, from buildings to performance art.<sup>33</sup>

Field notes and photographs have taken particular care to record not only the physical properties of a work of art, object or collection, but how curators choose to approach it, what interpretive methods they use and what issues they highlight. This served to develop a richer understanding of how the material culture of curiosity has been apprehended by various communities of engagement. In the early stages of the research, field notes encompassed a broad range of factors, and attempted to produce as full a description of objects and museal interpretation within a given environment as possible. The visit to the V&A to view early modern cabinets, for example, examined the following:

1. Objects: formal description and characteristics, including dimensions, structure, iconography, symbolism, inscriptions, owners, uses, provenance and dates of manufacture, accompanied by diagrammatic sketches of individual objects as *aides-mémoire*.
2. Position of objects in the display space, and juxtaposition and proximity to other museum objects and spaces of display.
3. Display apparatus and methods of display, including whether the cabinet was displayed open or closed, behind glass, or on open display, and whether part or all of the cabinet was accessible to touch.

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<sup>33</sup> For a discussion of the scope of visual cultural studies, see John A. Walker and Sarah Chaplin, *Visual Culture: An Introduction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 34.

4. Interpretation: use of written, audio and digital interpretation, and use of interactive elements, if any.
5. Use of light in the gallery space.
6. Overall categorisation of cabinets by the museum, as suggested by the above.
7. Objects resembling cabinets from the same and other times and places elsewhere in the museum.

However, as the research focus was narrowed, later visits concentrated on examining and recording particular aspects and in the final stages, sets of specific questions, as was the case for the Holburne Museum, rather than the broad heuristic categories given above.

The data collection carried out at these sites may therefore be understood as phenomenological in nature, in that, as Julian Thomas defines it, phenomenology ‘is concerned with the human encounter, experience and understanding of worldly things, and with how these happenings come to be possible’.<sup>34</sup> The embodied encounter, however, represents only the beginning of phenomenological readings of culture, for as British archaeologist Christopher Tilley notes,

In order to understand material culture we have to think in terms that go entirely beyond it, to go beneath the surface appearances to an underlying reality. This

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<sup>34</sup> Julian Thomas, ‘Phenomenology and Material Culture’, in Christopher Tilley *et al*, eds., *Handbook of Material Culture* (London: SAGE, 2006), pp. 43-59 (p. 43).

means that we are thinking in terms of the relationships between things, rather than in simple terms of the things themselves.<sup>35</sup>

Phenomenology, then, produces what Tilley describes as ‘abstract data’.<sup>36</sup> This data, Tilley argues, may be subject to a twofold process of analysis in which the design of a cabinet, for example, may first be linked to broader social practices or customs such as display. From here, it is theoretically possible to extrapolate the underlying structures and principles on which they are based in a given system, and to link these to other concepts.<sup>37</sup> This research does not pursue phenomenology to its philosophical extreme, to uncover the nature of being or consciousness, but uses this type of data as a starting point to begin to form conceptual categories and relationships between different forms of visual experiences.

A particular problem presented by the curiosity cabinet as a subject of study is its lack of physical survival. Many collections were dismantled and their contents dispersed on the death of the collector. Those objects which survived the breaking up of a collection have often fallen victims to human neglect, time and decay, particularly in the case of natural historical specimens.<sup>38</sup> The geographical distribution of surviving cabinets is also uneven, as English cabinets were still a rarity in the 1500s, and were not well-established until the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Christopher Tilley, ‘Interpreting Material Culture’, in Ian Hodder, ed., *The Meanings of Things: Material Culture and Symbolic Expression* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 185-194 (p. 188).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 188 and 190.

<sup>38</sup> MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 259.

<sup>39</sup> Arnold, *Cabinets for the Curious*, p. 13.

There are, of course, some remarkable survivals, but in most cases, the researcher must deal with the physical remnants and fragments of these early collections, and, in many cases, where collections have been destroyed or dispersed, along with the apparatus which gave them their physical context, the researcher is restricted to the use of documentary evidence alone, typically in the form of plans, images, catalogues and inventories.<sup>40</sup>

Nevertheless, such documentary sources are also problematic. Literary scholar Maria Zytaruk and historians of the museum such as MacGregor have argued that even a single cabinet can be said to have existed in multiple versions of itself simultaneously, as well as in various media – in print and in visual representation as much as in its physical realization.<sup>41</sup> Zytaruk cites the *Museo Cartaceo* or ‘Paper Museum’ of Cassiano dal Pozzo (1588-1657), a voluminous collection of prints and drawings of classical art and architecture and natural historical specimens, with detailed annotations, as a key example of this tendency.<sup>42</sup> This, Zytaruk contends, was a cabinet in the form of a book whose artistry also ‘translated the cabinet of curiosities into the realm of visual culture’.<sup>43</sup>

MacGregor has argued that it was the ‘elaborate philosophical infrastructure’ of the cabinet which determined its physical form.<sup>44</sup> This theory is particularly well-illustrated by the surviving pictorial evidence for the physical arrangement of the cabinet, in the form of

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<sup>40</sup> Findlen has observed that it is important to distinguish between the catalogue and the inventory, for where the inventory quantified the collection, the catalogue as a literary form in its own right served to both present and interpret it. Findlen, *Possessing Nature*, p. 36.

<sup>41</sup> Zytaruk, ‘Cabinets of Curiosities’, p. 22, and MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 25.

<sup>42</sup> Zytaruk, ‘Cabinets of Curiosities’, p. 7.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>44</sup> MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 11.

paintings and engravings, as well as illustrations appearing in catalogues and inventories. While some are believed to give a reasonably accurate depiction of the general ‘shape’ of the collection and the manner in which it was displayed, there exist numerous examples of images which present an idealized vision,<sup>45</sup> which does not correspond with the information given in the catalogue or the inventory. According to MacGregor, the surviving documentation for the Milanese cabinet of Manfredo Settala (1600-1680) – in the form of a 1666 engraving, a printed catalogue and a series of illustrated manuscript inventories – demonstrate a ‘striking lack of agreement’ between them as to how the collection was arranged and ordered.<sup>46</sup>

Another challenge of writing about the sensory experience of historical collections, most of which are no longer extant in material form, is the accompanying ‘decrease in physicality’ and risk of reductionism and caricature which results from transliterating the subjective experience of a tangible thing from a particular time and place into a piece of academic writing in quite a different time and place.<sup>47</sup>

Victor Buchli describes this transformation of ‘a mostly inarticulate realm of sensual experience into the two dimensions of a scholarly text or the “*nature-morte*” of the museum display’ as ‘inexorable’.<sup>48</sup> There is also the question of reconstructing the

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<sup>45</sup> For an in-depth discussion of idealised images of early modern ‘museum’ architecture, see Marcin Fabiański’s ‘Iconography of the Architecture of Ideal *Musaea* in the Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries’, in *Journal of the History of Collections*, 2.2 (1990), 95-134.

<sup>46</sup> MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 25.

<sup>47</sup> David Howes, ‘Scent, Sound and Synaesthesia: Intersensoriality and Material Culture’, in Christopher Tilley *et al*, eds., *Handbook of Material Culture* (London: SAGE, 2006), pp. 161-172 (p. 168).

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*



apparatus through which the visitor experienced this often hidden, secretive world – the physical setting, the architectural schema, the rooms, their function, relationship and ornamentation, the receptacles and containers for objects. Finally, there is the intangible context – in particular the intellectual and philosophical contexts in which these collections were understood and appraised by the individual.

Walter Benjamin has argued that ‘Possession and having are allied with the tactile, and stand in a certain opposition to the optical’.<sup>49</sup> Why, then, should a predominately visual research methodology be applied to the cabinet, which was experienced using more than one sense? Svetlana Alpers has argued that objects for the cabinet were primarily selected on the basis that they were visually interesting, regardless of whether the collector intended them for ‘attentive looking’ or not.<sup>50</sup> While this is debatable, and may erroneously assume that all or most of the material objects forming a cabinet were on display at all times, visual methodologies are valuable for their capacity to ‘relentlessly particularize, highlight the unique, go beyond the standardization of statistics and language’.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, as Martin Kemp argues, ‘To some extent, art history is about providing visual insights through the *adjustment* of our way of looking’.<sup>52</sup> This thesis is itself a study of practices of looking, and

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<sup>49</sup> Walter Benjamin cited in James Delbourgo, ‘What’s in the Box?’, in *Cabinet* magazine 41, ‘Infrastructure’, (2011), pp. 47-50 (p. 48).

<sup>50</sup> Svetlana Alpers, ‘The Museum as a Way of Seeing’, in Ivan Karp and Steven Lavine, eds., *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp. 25-32 (p. 26).

<sup>51</sup> M. Banks cited in Stephen Spencer, *Visual Research Methods in the Social Sciences: Awakening Visions* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2011 [2007]), p. 51.

<sup>52</sup> Martin Kemp, *Behind the Picture: Art and Evidence in the Italian Renaissance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 11 (my emphasis).

attentive looking is what makes it possible to not only study physical objects in depth, but to make connections between these objects and the practices that shaped them.

### *Methods of analysis*

This thesis relies upon both historical and art historical methods of analysis. Two methods which have proved particularly fruitful are formal and iconographical analyses of the Dutch ‘still life’ painting, which has helped illuminate the aesthetic rationale behind the selection, display and juxtaposition of objects in the cabinet, as well as demonstrating the significance of the *vanitas* in this period. Furthermore, the still life painting furnishes an example of a practice which had strong links with the production of cabinets within a particular temporal and geographical location, while identifying ‘ways of seeing’ in early modern art and visual culture which can be clearly linked to dominant themes in contemporary art practice. This, in turn, has served to highlight a key preoccupation of contemporary art with transience and the ephemeral.

The question of meaning in art is a complex one, tied to perceptions of historicity and temporality, and shaped by ideological, social and cultural values as well as the interpretation of the viewer, the intentions of the artist and the mode of display. Art historians Thomas Frangenberg and Robert Williams have observed that one of the key developments in the study of early modern art in Europe over the course of the last generation has been ‘a shift in emphasis from the work of art to the beholder’s experience

of it'.<sup>53</sup> That is, historians of art have turned their focus away from the idea that the meaning of a given artwork is intrinsic, to the notion of what Ernst Gombrich called the 'beholder's share',<sup>54</sup> in which meaning is actively created by the viewer's interaction with the work and the environment in which they find it at a given moment in time. This has led other art historians such as Rosalind Krauss to suggest that meaning in art is also dynamic and polysemic.<sup>55</sup>

This thesis draws upon the art historical methods of iconography and iconology first established by Erwin Panofsky (1892-1968), in order to analyse early modern visual culture contemporary with the cabinet and to establish the working of such conceptual components as symbols, allegories and categories. Both methods rely on establishing both relevant text and context in order to support their claims, as well as proceeding via comparative analysis.<sup>56</sup> Both also involve asking contextual questions of artworks such as the origin, manufacture and acquisition of the objects represented in still life paintings, their private meaning for the collector, as well as their wider cultural significance, and the nature of the relationship between the object and the artistic technique used to portray it.<sup>57</sup> Viewed from a material cultural perspective, it is possible to argue that that these paintings are not only

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<sup>53</sup> Thomas Frangenberg and Robert Williams, 'Introduction', in Thomas Frangenberg and Robert Williams, eds., *The Beholder: The Experience of Art in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 1-7 (p. 1).

<sup>54</sup> Gombrich cited in *ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Rosalind Krauss cited in Hatt and Klonk, *Art History*, p. 19.

<sup>56</sup> D'Alleva, *Methods and Theories*, pp. 27-8.

<sup>57</sup> Anne Lowenthal, 'Introduction', in Anne Lowenthal, ed., *The Object as Subject: Studies in the Interpretation of Still Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 3-12 (pp. 4-5).

material cultural artefacts in and of themselves, but the objects they depict – ‘represented’ artefacts – can also be considered as the objects of material culture.<sup>58</sup>

This thesis acknowledges, but does not primarily focus upon, the thorny issue of artistic intention. While an understanding of the artist’s original intentions for a given piece may be illuminating, works of art are capable in and of themselves of creating meaning at many different levels, which may alter according to their geographical and temporal context and presentation, and which speak differently to different individuals. Moreover, artistic intention is not a static entity: the very act of constructing a work may change its intention, and artists frequently revise their own interpretations of how a work should be or could be received and what its significance is in relation to their overall body of work. This research does not, therefore, conduct interviews with contemporary artists, but approaches all evidence – historical and contemporary – from the point of its critical reception.

### *Translation of Samuel Quiccheberg’s Inscriptiones*

The development of this research project was also shaped by the identification and translation of a primary source document. In searching for a solid, evidence-based foundation on which to base the study of the historical cabinet, I frequently returned to a well-known text to historians of the museum: Samuel Quiccheberg’s *Inscriptiones vel Tituli Theatri Amplissimi*, or, *The Inscriptions or Titles of the Most Complete Theatre*. Published

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

in Munich by Adam Berg in 1565,<sup>59</sup> Quiccheberg's text sets out a flexible model of collecting for collectors to follow, detailing the types of objects to be collected, and how to display them. Crucially, Quiccheberg's text also establishes five categories of collecting activity and describes the relationships between them.

Despite its privileged status as one of the most frequently-cited texts in histories of the museum, however, the *Inscriptiones* has only recently appeared in full English translation. The publication of Mark Meadow and Bruce Robertson's translation and critical edition by the Getty Research Institute in November 2013 came too late for the researcher to rely upon this text during the active research phase, and the manuscript was unavailable for consultation prior to this date. However, it has proven a useful point of reference. During the active research phase of this project, only translated excerpts were available in English textbooks, such as Susan Pearce and Ken Arnold's edited volume *The Collector's Voice*.<sup>60</sup>

At present, not all published translations or interpretations agree. For example, Paula Findlen interprets the phrase 'miraculosum [*sic*] rerum promptuarium', as 'a promptuary of miraculous things',<sup>61</sup> whereas Adriana Turpin contends that this same phrase should be

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<sup>59</sup> An earlier, unpublished manuscript from 1565 is held in the Vatican Library, but this thesis examines the later, printed Berg edition held in the Bavarian State Library, Munich, VD16 Q 63. See Meadow, 'Introduction', in *The First Treatise*, p. 1. The Berg text is unpaginated, and all page numbers cited from the Leonardis translation relate to the page numbers assigned to the digital version of the Berg text which can be consulted online.

<sup>60</sup> Susan Pearce and Kenneth Arnold, trans. by Julie Hochstrasser and Paul Psoinos, 'Samuel à Quiccheberg's 'classes': The First Modern Museological Text', in Pearce and Arnold, eds., *The Collector's Voice: Critical Readings in the Practice of Collecting*, 4 vols (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), II, 'Early Voices', pp. 6-11.

<sup>61</sup> Paula Findlen, 'The Modern Muses: Renaissance Collecting and the Cult of Remembrance', in *Museums and Memory*, ed. by Susan A. Crane (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), pp. 161-178 (p. 163).

understood as signifying ‘works of nature’, in contrast to ‘artificiosarum rerum conclare’, or ‘works of art’.<sup>62</sup>

Guessing at the precise meaning of textual fragments in translation is a risky strategy, and so the researcher’s initial task was to conduct a thorough literature review of the secondary sources pertaining to this text. This, together with email correspondence with Professor Mark Meadow of the Department of the History of Art and Architecture at the University of California, Santa Barbara, on his translation in collaboration with Bruce Robertson – begun in 1997<sup>63</sup> and still in progress in early 2012 – enabled the researcher to determine the most relevant parts of the text, as well as to partly re-establish the original context and intention of the work, and to identify the key areas of disagreement within existing translations.

Secondly, a colleague, Helen Wilkinson, was engaged to translate some short sections of the text in order to ascertain their relevance to the thesis. The results being positive, the second phase saw the commissioning of a fuller translation of key parts of the text. Antonio Leonardis of the University of Leicester was commissioned to produce a partial translation of the text in November 2012, which was completed in July 2013. With any translation come problems of historical accuracy, context and second-hand interpretation. However, the process of translation was a collaborative one, guided by the researcher. Moreover, as each section of the translation was completed, the researcher checked the text for errors,

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<sup>62</sup> Adriana Turpin, ‘The New World Collections of Cosimo I de’ Medici and their role in the creation of a Kunst- and Wunderkammer in the Palazzo Vecchio’, in Robert Evans, and Alexander Marr, eds., *Curiosity and Wonder from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 63-85 (p. 79).

<sup>63</sup> Meadow and Robertson, ‘Acknowledgements’, p. xii.

and sent these back to the translator for review. In so doing, the translator's technical expertise was combined with the researcher's greater knowledge of the historical context of the publication, which enabled such errors to be identified.

However, as the sense of the Leonardis translation is very literal, care needs to be taken in the interpretation of those passages which are rendered slightly ambiguous by the choice of words and the order in which they appear in the 1565 Berg edition. Given the difficulty of interpretation, the Leonardis translation appears in parallel English and Latin text in the Appendix, so that the examiners of this thesis may consult it word-for-word.

While the original text is unpaginated, the Leonardis translation comprised the following sections, in numerical order from the title page, given as page 1:

- Title page, and note on the text, pp. 1-2.
- Section One, in which Quiccheberg sets out five classes of objects to be included in his theatre. Within this Classes One, Two and Five were translated, (Classes Three and Four having been already published in full),<sup>64</sup> pp. 3-10, and 19-22.
- Section Three: 'Recommendations and Advice', in which Quiccheberg elaborates upon his rationale for ordering the collection he proposes, pp. 26-30.
- Section Four: 'Digressions', in which Quiccheberg elaborates upon certain subclasses he sets out in Section One, pp. 30-46.

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<sup>64</sup> See Pearce and Arnold, 'Samuel à Quiccheberg's 'classes'', pp. 6-11.

- Final Section, Section Seven: Comprising a series of six dedicatory poems, the first in Greek (omitted), and the remainder in Latin, addressed to Quiccheberg by his contemporaries, pp. 62-64.

Of a total of 64 pages, 38 were translated into English during the course of this research, and an additional 8 had previously appeared in translation. The remaining sections were Section Two, ‘Museums and Workshops’, on the connections between the theatre and other arenas of princely collecting, such as craft workshops, as well as religious and utilitarian spaces, Section Five, ‘The Exemplars’, on exemplary collections, and Section 6, the Conclusion. These sections have subsequently appeared in Meadow and Robertson’s translation.

While the choice of Latin for the *Inscriptiones* was likely a deliberate expression of Quiccheberg’s own scholarly credentials, as well as furnishing a concise means to convey his message, it presents a considerable challenge for the contemporary scholar. Not only does this Neo-Latin text combine classical Latin with medieval and Renaissance elements,<sup>65</sup> but Quiccheberg employed an eccentric writing style which renders his meaning in parts of the work ambiguous, and at times, intractable. Abbreviations also

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<sup>65</sup> ‘Neo-Latin’ refers to a distinctive style of Latin which emerged during the Renaissance. Neo-Latin was often closer to classical Latin than to medieval forms of the language, but this term is sometimes broadly applied to all forms of Latin written after 1500, including those which employed more medieval than classical elements. See Terence O. Tunberg, ‘Humanistic Latin’, in *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide*, ed. by F.A.C. Mantello and A.G. Rigg, revised edn, (Catholic University of America Press, 1999), pp. 130-6 (p. 130). Johann Rammingen characterises early modern or Neo-Latin as ‘a language encompassing many layers and strong contradictions’. See Rammingen, ‘Neo-Latin: Character and Development’, in *Brill’s Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World*, Macropaedia, ed. by Philip Ford, Jan Bloemendal and Charles Fantazzi (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2014), pp. 21-36 (p. 21).



abound. Moreover, Neo-Latin words and their meanings, spelling, grammar and syntax often differ considerably from more well-known classical examples.

As a late sixteenth-century text it is also important to treat Quiccheberg's *Inscriptiones* with a degree of caution when using it to examine seventeenth-century material, but there is considerable evidence to suggest that while the cabinet became narrower in scope during the 1600s, Quiccheberg's ideas were still influential.

Even with the publication of the Meadow and Robertson translation, there are still passages within the text whose meaning is unclear, and references to persons known to Quiccheberg of whom no record can be found within existing historical scholarship. The potential for further research on the subject of Quiccheberg is therefore very strong.

Meadow suggests that the linguistic peculiarities of this text were a direct result of Quiccheberg's having to explain 'a new phenomenon, the Kunst- and Wunderkammer itself'.<sup>66</sup> This is certainly plausible, for, as Quiccheberg states in his treatise, one imitated the ancients in order to surpass their achievements,<sup>67</sup> and, according to historian of language Terence Tunberg, many Renaissance writers chose to be 'creative' in their emulation of classical authors, and adapted the language as they saw fit by adding new words, sometimes based on their own, vernacular language, and departing from classical

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<sup>66</sup> Meadow, 'Introduction', in Meadow and Robertson, *The First Treatise*, p. 1.

<sup>67</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, pp. 26-7.

grammatical conventions.<sup>68</sup> At the same time, some medieval conventions prevailed, producing an often complex mixture of styles and conventions.

## **Thesis structure**

This thesis comprises six chapters and an appendix. Chapter One interrogates some of the key museological assumptions about the curiosity cabinet, and offers a revised definition of the cabinet as a complex set of cultural practices related to but distinct from contemporary museums. Chapter Two draws upon the new translation of parts of Quiccheberg's treatise to consider some of the concepts which governed the organisation of material within cabinets, foregrounding the notion of the category as a creative proposition within an act of rhetorical assemblage. This second chapter also demonstrates how these categories operated in practice through the example of an early seventeenth-century collection and its display apparatus. Chapter Three examines framing devices and their spatial performance in art and visual culture contemporaneous with the cabinet, with a particular focus upon the 'nest of boxes' as a visual and conceptual framing device. This chapter therefore serves to foreground those practices which directly informed the cabinet's strategies of display. Chapter Four investigates how the seventeenth-century still life painting may be harnessed as a means of studying these practices further through an examination of compositional strategies, spatial manipulation and symbolism.

Chapters One, Two, Three and Four therefore examine evidence for the broader rationale behind the concepts, display methods and consumption of early modern collections. In so

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<sup>68</sup> Tunberg, 'Humanistic Latin', pp. 130-1.

doing, these chapters use the cabinet as an historical and cultural vantage point from which to identify specific aspects of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century artistic and aesthetic practice which played a seminal role in the cabinet's construction, and which also, arguably, inform contemporary art practice.

Chapter Five examines the claims made by a growing number of scholars, including Adalgisa Lugli, James Putnam, Stephen Bann, Marion Endt-Jones and Bruce Robertson, that some of the cabinet's methods are also resonant within contemporary art practice. This thesis therefore examines not only those contemporary artists whose work visually or otherwise overtly references the cabinet, but others whose concepts, modes of engagement, and expression nevertheless resemble those of the early modern collector. In particular, Chapter Five examines the formal and visual correspondences between historical and contemporary forms of representation, and considers the concepts by which these correspondences are governed. Chapter Six offers a summary of the research findings and concluding remarks upon the significance and contribution of the research project. The Appendix offers a new translation of the core sections of Samuel Quiccheberg's *Inscriptiones*, in parallel Latin and English text.

# Chapter One

## Defining the Curiosity Cabinet

in Switzerland, the Low Countries and the free Imperial Cities of Germany, there are places designed for all manner of Ingenuities wch [*sic*] they call Kunst-Kamern that is the Chamber of Artifices.

John Dury, extract from a letter to Benjamin Worsley, 1647 <sup>69</sup>

The early modern curiosity cabinet is peculiarly resistant to contemporary theoretical frameworks.<sup>70</sup> Not only is it difficult to define on account of the diversity, complexity, and idiosyncrasy of its physical incarnations <sup>71</sup> and, arguably, its longevity as a form of collection, display and interpretation, it also occupies a liminal space in the history of collections, neither medieval treasury nor prototype museum. Furthermore, the history and etymology of the term ‘cabinet of curiosity’ is problematic, even at its most basic, physical level.<sup>72</sup> This chapter establishes the researcher’s definition of the historical cabinet, but will

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<sup>69</sup> John Dury cited in Arnold, *Cabinets for the Curious*, p. 27. Dury (1596-1680) was a renowned English intellectual and educational reformer.

<sup>70</sup> See Martin Kemp, “‘Wrought by No Artist’s Hand’: The Natural, the Artificial, the Exotic, and the Scientific in Some Artifacts from the Renaissance”, in *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America 1450-1650*, ed. by Claire Farago (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 176-196 (pp. 179-181, and p. 196).

<sup>71</sup> Giuseppe Olmi, ‘Science-Honour-Metaphor: Italian Cabinets of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’, in *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum*, ed. by Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004 [1985]), pp. 129-143 (p. 129).

<sup>72</sup> Olmi, ‘Science-Honour-Metaphor’, p. 129.

also consider some of the many names given to collections during this era, and how these were applied. It will also briefly consider related forms of collecting practice, from which the cabinet may be distinguished. The next section examines the broad critical context in which the research is situated, and to which this thesis is a response.

This thesis interprets cabinets of curiosities as the diverse, privately-owned collections which flourished in Europe from the late fifteenth century until well into the eighteenth century.<sup>73</sup> Although in use throughout the early modern period, the term ‘cabinet’ was a flexible one. It might refer to the physical cabinet or apparatus which housed a given collection, to the room or series of rooms in which the collection was housed and displayed, or to the collection itself.<sup>74</sup> Collections were often housed within a private residence, but might also appear in semi-public settings such as churches, gardens, libraries, meeting-places and coffee houses, as well as in purpose-built settings.<sup>75</sup> Cabinets also co-existed

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<sup>73</sup> Bazin states that many cabinets were ‘liberally open to the public’ during the early modern period, basing this assumption upon contemporary travel diaries, itineraries and guides. Bazin, trans. by Jane van Nuis Cahill, *The Museum Age* (New York: Universe, 1967), pp. 72 and 89. However, while some cabinets, such as the Munich *kunstammer*, were open to ‘the public’, they were not necessarily open to all. William Stenhouse suggests a more nuanced and situated interpretation of ‘public’ collections in Renaissance Italy in his study of cardinals’ collections of antiquities which were open to certain sections of the public, but remained strictly controlled in terms of entry requirements, supervision and even architectural design. Stenhouse, ‘Visitors, Display, and Reception in the Antiquity Collections of Late-Renaissance Rome’, in *Renaissance Quarterly*, 58.2 (2005), 397-434.

<sup>74</sup> MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 11.

<sup>75</sup> For churches see Arnold, *Cabinets*, p. 18. For gardens, see Lucia Tomasi’s discussion of botanical gardens in Pisa, Leiden, Paris, Messina and Montpellier during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, which were ‘annexed’ to collections of objects, libraries and artists’ studios. Lucia Tongiorgi Tomasi, trans. by Lisa Chien, ‘Gardens of Knowledge and the *République des Gens de Sciences*’, in *Baroque Garden Cultures: Emulation, Sublimation, Subversion*, ed. by Michel Conan (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2005), pp. 85-129 (pp. 109-121). For the rest see Peter C. D. Brears, ‘Ralph Thoresby, A Museum Visitor in Stuart England’, in *Journal of the History of Collections*, 1.2 (1989), 213-224 (p. 218).

with other kinds of collections, such as the treasury, or *schatzkammer*, from which they are generally distinguished.<sup>76</sup>

Cabinets were formulated by a variety of collectors in a number of social and intellectual stratas and contexts. Collectors were often, but not exclusively male – women also contributed to collecting activity during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, both as financiers and patrons of the arts,<sup>77</sup> and as collectors. Isabella d’Este Gonzaga (1474-1539) was one of the most seminal female collectors of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. She became Marchesa of Mantua in 1490, and possessed, as she put it, an ‘unquenchable desire for antiquities’,<sup>78</sup> collecting antique coins, bronze and marble statues, as well as books and paintings, but also commissioning works of contemporary art by prominent artists such as Andrea Mantegna (c. 1431-1506).<sup>79</sup>

Collectors were also predominately drawn from the upper echelons of society; in particular royalty, the aristocracy, and to some extent the clergy, but were also represented by lower-ranking scholars, physicians and apothecaries who might retain a collection of specimens

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<sup>76</sup> MacGregor, *Curiosity*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>77</sup> On her marriage to Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel (1585-1646), in 1606, Aletheia Howard (1585-1654) (née Talbot), was instrumental in contributing part of the funds which enabled her husband to establish himself as one of the foremost art collectors in seventeenth-century England, as well as collecting art herself. See David Howarth, ‘Introduction’, in *Thomas Howard Earl of Arundel* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 1985), pp. 5-7 (p. 5), and David Howarth, *Lord Arundel and his Circle*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 51.

<sup>78</sup> Clifford M. Brown, ‘A Ferrarese Lady and a Mantuan Marchesa: The Art and Antiquities Collection of Isabella d’Este Gonzaga (1474-1539)’, in *Women and Art in Early Modern Europe: Patrons, Collectors and Connoisseurs* ed. by Cynthia Lawrence (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), pp. 53-71 (p. 55).

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59 and 67.

for study purposes, as well as the practical business of making medicines.<sup>80</sup> The John Tradescants, (c. 1570-1638) and (1608-1662), for example, were father-and-son gardeners in the employ of illustrious patrons including King Charles I (1600-1649) and Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury (1563-1612), and travelled to then little-known parts of the world including Russia, North Africa and Virginia, in search of new botanical specimens. In doing so, they amassed a substantial collection of their own in the process, known as ‘The Ark’.<sup>81</sup> Wealthy merchants such as Philipp Hainhofer (1578-1647) are also known to have amassed large collections.<sup>82</sup>

Cabinets of curiosity typically comprised both *naturalia*; that is, natural specimens, and *artificialia*; the products of artifice, and might conceivably house anything from unicorn’s tails to Chinese porcelain.<sup>83</sup> For example, in his 1656 catalogue, John Tradescant the Younger (1608-1662) reflects both the tendency for heterogeneous objects and their broad division into two categories when he describes the scope of his collection:

Now for the materialls themselves I reduce them unto two sorts; one *Natural* [...] as divers sorts of Birds, foure-footed Beasts and Fishes [...] Others [...] as the shell-

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<sup>80</sup> MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 21.

<sup>81</sup> Based in Lambeth, London, the Tradescants’ collection furnished the foundational objects for what later became The Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, which first opened its doors in 1683. The site of The Ark is now the Garden Museum, at which the Tradescants’ restored tomb may be viewed.

<sup>82</sup> See Marika Keblusek, ‘*Mercator sapiens*: Merchants as Cultural Entrepreneurs’, in *Double Agents: Cultural and Political Brokerage in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Marika Keblusek and Badeloch Vera Noldus (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2011), pp. 95-110 (p. 99).

<sup>83</sup> Both of these objects appear in Thomas Platter’s description of his visit to the London home of Walter Cope in 1599, which housed Cope’s collection and was ‘stuffed with queer foreign objects in every corner’. See Pearce and Arnold, ‘The German traveller Thomas Platter describes the English Collection of Walter Cope’, in *The Collector’s Voice*, pp. 21-25 (p. 23).

Creatures, Insects, Mineralls, Outlandish-Fruites, and the like, which are part of the *Materia Medica* [...] The other sort is *Artificialls*, as Vtensills, Householdstuffe, Habits, Instruments of Warre used by several Nations, rare curiosities of Art, &c. The *Catalogue* of my *Garden* I have also added in the Conclusion [...] <sup>84</sup>

Thus Tradescant's 'Outlandish-Fruites' occupied the same conceptual space as 'divers sorts of strange Fishes', <sup>85</sup> 'Blood that rained in the *Isle of Wight*, attested by Sir *Jo: Oglander*', <sup>86</sup> and 'A set of Chesse-men in a pepper-corn turned in Ivory'. <sup>87</sup> Yet Tradescant observed certain distinctions as well as relationships between these materials; the garden, for example, another microcosm, is subsidiary to the object collection, which itself consists of divisions and sub-divisions such as *Materia Medica*, natural materials used to make medicines.

As both Paula Findlen <sup>88</sup> and Mark Meadow <sup>89</sup> have observed, collecting entities during this period were often physically as well as intellectually complex, and did not necessarily describe a room put aside for the display of objects. A cabinet might consist of or be appended to a library, such as that of Antonio Giganti (1535-1598) in Bologna, a workshop, as did the *kunstkammer*, or art cabinet, of Augustus of Saxony (1526-1586) in Dresden, or

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<sup>84</sup> John Tradescant [the younger], *Musæum Tradescantianum: Or, A Collection of Rarities Preserved at South-Lambeth neer London* (London: John Grismond, 1656), fols. 11<sup>v</sup>-12<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 13<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>88</sup> Findlen, 'The Museum: Its Classical Etymology and Renaissance Genealogy', p. 160.

<sup>89</sup> Mark Meadow, 'Quiccheberg and the Copious Object: Wenzel Jamnitzer's Silver Writing Box', in *The Lure of the Object*, ed. by Stephen Melville (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 39-58 (p. 49).



even an observatory, as did the cabinet of Emperor Rudolf II (1552-1612) at the Hradschin Palace in Prague.<sup>90</sup> Its boundaries might also extend into a garden, such as Tradescant's, which could sustain living examples of flora and faunae, or a *grotta* such as that of Isabella d'Este below the *studiolo* of the ducal palace in Mantua.<sup>91</sup>

That the ideal collection stood amongst a complex of related spaces, practices and performances for the production of knowledge is substantiated by extant texts on the subject, including the English philosopher and courtier Francis Bacon's (1521-1626) *Gesta Grayorum*, first presented as a play in 1594, and published posthumously in 1688, in which a princely advisor counsels his monarch to build 'four principal works and monuments of yourself'. The first of these is a library, followed by a garden containing 'all rare beasts', birds and fish, which furnishes 'in small compass a model of universal nature made private'. The third recommendation is

a goodly huge cabinet, wherein whatsoever the hand of man by exquisite art or engine hath made rare in stuff, form, or motion; whatsoever singularity chance and the shuffle of things hath produced; whatsoever Nature have wrought in things that want life and may be kept; shall be sorted and included.<sup>92</sup>

The fourth component is what Bacon calls a 'still-house', a kind of alchemical laboratory. Then, as now, cabinets of curiosity are most often perceived as they were during the height of their popularity in the mid to late sixteenth century, as repositories of the extraordinary –

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<sup>90</sup> MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 35 and pp. 15-16.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>92</sup> Francis Bacon, 'A Device for the Gray's Inn Revels', in *Francis Bacon: The Major Works*, ed. by Brian Vickers, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002 [1688]), pp. 54-5.

with a particular predilection for the exotic, rare, strange or ingenious object.<sup>93</sup> Yet the purpose of Baconian collecting (although there is no evidence to suggest that Bacon himself collected), was to dispel mystery, not to cultivate it, except through the genius of the collector. For, Bacon states, ‘when all other miracles and wonders shall cease, by reason that you shall have discovered their natural causes, yourself shall be left the only miracle and wonder of the world’.<sup>94</sup>

### *Terminology*

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, collections were known by many names, but few were applied with any real degree of consistency. Thus, alongside the cabinet there also pre-and co-existed many alternative terms, mostly Italian, German and Latin,<sup>95</sup> all of which, arguably, refer to curiosity cabinets of some description. Each of these terms, however, possess their own shades of meaning, evoking the distinguishable but subtle differences in the many types of collection which existed at this time, all of which tend to be conflated today under the umbrella term of ‘curiosity cabinet’. For example, the Italian *scrittoi* tended to denote a small room set aside for private study and which might also

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<sup>93</sup> Benjamin Schmidt’s discussion of what constituted the ‘exotic’ in the seventeenth-century Dutch geographers reveals an interesting commonality between all of these categories. The Dutch, he argues, ‘sold an *idea* of the world [...] and this idea marketed a world that was identifiably “exotic”’. See Schmidt, ‘Inventing Exoticism: The Project of Dutch Geography and the Marketing of the World, circa 1700’, in *Merchants and Marvels: Commerce, Science, and Art in Early Modern Europe* ed. by Pamela H. Smith and Paula Findlen (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 347–369 (p. 349).

<sup>94</sup> Bacon, ‘Gray’s Inn Revels’, p. 55.

<sup>95</sup> Bazin notes the fashion for ‘Latinisms’ in this period – new Latin words constructed to describe contemporary collecting practice while simultaneously grounding it in the old, such as *rarothea*, a collection of rarities. See Bazin, *The Museum Age*, p. 87.

function as an exhibition space – for painted as well as three-dimensional objects <sup>96</sup> (Figure 3) – whereas the German *kunstschränk* pertained to a miniature cabinet often designed to function as the centrepiece and microcosm of a larger collection <sup>97</sup> (Figure 4). It should also be noted that these two examples of cabinets tended to appear in particular temporal and geographical locations – the former was a feature of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy, whereas the latter was more commonly produced in Germany (Augsburg) and the Netherlands (Antwerp) during the mid to late seventeenth century.<sup>98</sup>

The term is further complicated by the shifting meaning of ‘curiosity’, of which the modern sense of the ‘curious’ as something unusual or strange dates from the late seventeenth century. During the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the term began to accrue the more pejorative associations it has today, as something naïve or credulous.<sup>99</sup> In fact, the meaning and usage of ‘curiosity’ has changed considerably since the early sixteenth century, reflecting shifting conceptions of and attitudes to knowledge production in Western thought and culture. *Curiosi* or *cognoscenti* were among the names given to those who sought to expand the boundaries of knowledge through the accumulation and study of collections of objects in a cabinet. Arnold suggests this heralded the beginnings of a new approach to objects which viewed them primarily as repositories of knowledge rather than

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<sup>96</sup> Turpin, ‘Cosimo I de’ Medici’, p. 73.

<sup>97</sup> Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, p. 120.

<sup>98</sup> Baarsen, *17<sup>th</sup>-Century Cabinets*, p. 23.

<sup>99</sup> Claire Preston, ‘The Jocund Cabinet and the Melancholy Museum in Seventeenth-Century English Literature’, in *Curiosity and Wonder from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, ed. by Robert Evans and Alexander Marr (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 91.

as ‘emblems of connoisseurship’.<sup>100</sup> Nevertheless, this approach remained complex and multifaceted, and certainly retained aspects of its former nature. The meaning of curiosity has, moreover, been discussed at length by other scholars such as Alexander Marr, and does not truly concern us here.<sup>101</sup>



**Figure 3:**

**Detail of the *trompe l'oeil* panelling of Federigo da Montefeltro's (1422-1482) *scrittoio*, depicting papers on a lectern before an open cupboard. This *scrittoio* was built between c. 1475-80 at the Palazzo Ducale, Gubbio: another was housed in Federigo's palace in Urbino. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1939 (39.153). By kind permission of and © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City.**

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<sup>100</sup> Arnold, *Cabinets for the Curious*, p. 20.

<sup>101</sup> For a discussion of the changing meaning of curiosity during the early modern period, see Alexander Marr's introduction in *Curiosity and Wonder*, pp. 1-20.



Figure 4:

An example of a *kuntschrank*, or miniature cabinet constructed by Melchior Baumgartner (1621-1686) or his workshop in Augsburg, Southern Germany, a major centre of production for cabinets of this type, in 1650. Unusually, this cabinet which comprises a walnut, oak and maple carcass has been veneered in ivory, at a time when most Augsburg cabinets bore an ebony veneer. The cabinet's rich materials, and the gilded copper panels painted with scenes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and surrounded by carnelians signify the seventeenth-century interest in materials and their manipulation. By kind permission of and © Victoria and Albert Museum, London, W.60-1923.

It is, however, worth mentioning that 'museum' is a related term which is sometimes used interchangeably with the various names which existed for the curiosity cabinet, both during the early modern period, and by historians such as Findlen.<sup>102</sup> 'Museum', or *mouseion* is of Greek origin, and is often translated as a place or temple dedicated to the Muses, the nine

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<sup>102</sup> Crane, *Museums and Memory*, p. 67, and Findlen, 'The Museum', p. 161.

goddesses of the arts in Greek mythology, as well as referring to the library of Alexandria, the largest and most important library of the ancient world.<sup>103</sup> As Germain Bazin notes, however, these were primarily places of learning, and not collections of art.<sup>104</sup> Indeed, ancient *mouseia* might comprise anything from an open-air shrine at which offerings were laid, to an indoor study facility appended to a building for religious worship.<sup>105</sup> The term was re-applied to collections as early as 1520 by the bishop and scholar Paolo Giovio (1483-1552) to his *Museum Jovianum* in Como, Italy.<sup>106</sup> This should not, however, suggest that Giovio's and others' appropriation of the term in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was at all analogous with the manner in which we define museums today.

Findlen has discussed the origin and meaning of the word 'museum' at length, and her description of its use during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as an amorphous term which allowed for multiple interpretations may also be usefully applied to the curiosity cabinet:

From a philological standpoint, its peculiar expansiveness allowed it to cross and confuse the intellectual and philosophical categories of *bibliotheca*, *thesaurus* and *pandechion* with visual constructs such as *cornucopia* and *gazophylacium*, and

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<sup>103</sup> Findlen, 'The Museum', p. 161.

<sup>104</sup> Bazin, *The Museum Age*, p. 16.

<sup>105</sup> The 'Museum' of the ancient world appears to have fulfilled multiple functions as a sacred space and place of learning, art, memory and royal patronage, before it was primarily defined as a repository of objects during the late medieval and early Renaissance eras. See Susan Pearce and Alexandra Bounia, eds., 'The Museum of Alexandria', in *The Collector's Voice: Critical Readings in the Practice of Collecting*, 4 vols (Aldershot and Burlington: VT, Ashgate, 2000), I, 'Ancient Voices', p. 88.

<sup>106</sup> Susan Crane, ed., *Museums and Memory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 67.

spatial constructs such as *studio*, *casino*, *cabinet/gabinetto*, *galleria* and *theatro*,<sup>107</sup> creating a rich and complex terminology that described significant aspects of the intellectual and cultural life of early modern Europe while alluding to its social configuration.<sup>108</sup>

The complex nature of early modern collections was thus reflected in their nebulous terminology. In his discussion of early collections and media, media theorist Wolfgang Ernst also points to the implications of this for the physical structure of the cabinet and the corporeality of its collections. Originally conceived as ‘a space of contemplation’, it was thus possible for the ‘museum’ as Ernst articulates it, to be ‘virtually without objects [...] a cognitive field of ideas, words and artefacts that narrowed to a fixed meaning only in its institutional inscription and crystallization’. Ernst contends that ‘for a long time [...] the museum was not a place, but a text, occupying a position in the discursive field’ between the types of collections described by Findlen above.<sup>109</sup>

An alternative perspective is supplied by cultural critic Alan Stewart, who, although he writes about the Elizabethan ‘closet’ – small, private rooms belonging to the lord or lady of the house – interrogates the apparent shift from private to public space in late seventeenth-century collections. Stewart notes that the closet was

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<sup>107</sup> The *gazophylacium* is defined by Murray as a cabinet of coins and gems, and was apparently first applied to church treasuries, otherwise known as *schatzkammern*, or ‘treasure chambers’. See Murray, *Museums*, p. 34.

<sup>108</sup> Findlen, ‘The Museum: Its Classical Etymology’, p. 160.

<sup>109</sup> Ernst, ‘Archi(ve)textures of Museology’, pp. 17-18.

constructed as a place of utter privacy, of total withdrawal from the public sphere of the household – but it simultaneously functions as a very *public* gesture of withdrawal, a very public sign of privacy.<sup>110</sup>

Thus, as Ken Arnold observes, the distinction between the cabinet and the museum may in fact be represented by ‘a change in the mode of *performance*’ as much as a change in how such spaces operated and were perceived.<sup>111</sup>

In sum, the cabinet was diverse in its conception, methods and scope, and was subject to individual tastes and predilections as well as changing perceptions of the world and how it could best be interpreted and understood. This study interprets the curiosity cabinet as distinct from the later concept of the museum,<sup>112</sup> and focuses upon the cabinet as it existed in its heyday, namely within European collections of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with a principal focus on physical spaces: rooms, furniture and the objects they contained. Notwithstanding the observations of Findlen and Ernst, I shall avoid substituting the term ‘museum’ for that of ‘cabinet’ where possible, as this would seem to presuppose an epistemic and paradigmatic continuation between pre- and post-Enlightenment collections which, as shall be observed in the next chapter, is somewhat anachronistic and

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<sup>110</sup> Alan Stewart, ‘The Early Modern Closet Discovered’, in *Representations*, 50 (1995), 76-100 (p. 81).

<sup>111</sup> Arnold, *Cabinets for the Curious*, p. 27 (my emphasis).

<sup>112</sup> Susan Pearce suggests that the cabinet was formed ‘in a spirit of dislocation from previous medieval and Catholic certainties’. See Susan Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 371. Arguably, however, there were also certain continuities with earlier forms of collecting, as Stephen Bann in his discussion of relic collections in the late medieval era contends. Bann argues that display and interpretation in the curiosity cabinet was ‘tributary to certain established ways of disposing objects and communicating through them, even if the very precondition of curiosity signalled a shift in the world-view, or the epistemic matrix, that had underwritten the earlier regime’. Bann, ‘Shrines, Curiosities, and the Rhetoric of Display’, p. 15.



therefore unsuited to a discussion of the construction of meaning within collections of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The next section will examine some of the key works of scholarship on the historical cabinet in more detail, while positioning the arguments of this thesis within current debates.

## **A brief historiography of the curiosity cabinet**

During the past three decades, a wealth of scholarly material has emerged on the cabinet, as well as on allied subjects such as the nature of curiosity and wonder in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>113</sup> While much museological scholarship has served to deepen our understanding of early collections, and has, in particular, enriched our knowledge of their materiality – their physical contents, arrangement and architectural settings<sup>114</sup> – the concepts which informed these practices have often been approached from a monolithic perspective. In particular, historians of the museum have tended to posit the curiosity cabinet as a ‘proto-museum’<sup>115</sup> in a historical narrative which is both linear and progressive,<sup>116</sup> and which consequently overlooks the vital cultural and epistemological

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<sup>113</sup> See Evans and Marr, *Curiosity and Wonder*.

<sup>114</sup> For a précis of a detailed study of a single collection see Lorenz Seelig, ‘The Munich Kunstkammer, 1565-1807’, in *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth-and Seventeenth-Century Europe*, ed. by Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London: House of Stratus, 2001 [1985]), pp. 101-119.

<sup>115</sup> See MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 5.

<sup>116</sup> For an overview of the ‘traditional’ museological approach to the cabinet, see: Impey and MacGregor, *The Origins of Museums*; Paula Findlen, ‘The Museum: Its Classical Etymology and Renaissance Genealogy’, in *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum*, ed. by Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004 [1989]); Arnold, *Cabinets for the Curious*; and MacGregor, *Curiosity*.

contexts in which collecting practice occurred.<sup>117</sup> Moreover, as yet relatively few works of scholarship have examined the historiography of the cabinet in depth; in particular, how early collections have been constructed and accorded renewed significance in the present, both within and beyond academia.

The task of this subchapter – and to a significant extent this thesis – is to step beyond the confines of museal history, while investigating how the cabinet has been understood within this community, and what happens if this lens is removed. The cabinet does not belong to any one discipline, but to multiple communities of engagement – scholarly and otherwise – in which it is constructed and accorded meaning and significance in very different ways. This section will examine some of the ways in which the historical cabinet has been understood during the past two decades. It begins with a brief examination of early scholarship on the cabinet, and how this influenced later research, before considering some of the major contributors on the subject of the curiosity cabinet from the fields of museology and art history. Finally, it will consider the work of some of those scholars who have begun to link the cabinet to contemporary forms of cultural practice.

While writing on the cabinet is now dominated by historians of the museum, it was once considered the preserve of the art historian, and before that, the antiquarian.<sup>118</sup> Alexander Marr has suggested that the current corpus of scholarship on cabinets of curiosity originally developed out of art historical interest in the history of collecting, although he acknowledges that initially this interest was typically limited to paintings and sculpture in

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<sup>117</sup> David Martin, *Curious Visions of Modernity: Enchantment, Magic and the Sacred* (Cambridge, MA, and London: The MIT Press, 2011), p. 12.

<sup>118</sup> Marr, in Evans and Marr, *Curiosity and Wonder*, p. 9.

early collections.<sup>119</sup> For example, art historian and curator Germain Bazin's *The Museum Age* (1967) traces the museum back to its reputedly classical origins, and examines both the cabinet and related forms such as the contemporary museum and gallery in tandem with the wider history of art collecting. Bazin's art historical framework is reflected by the thematic titles of the four chapters in which the cabinet appears: 'Renaissance', 'Mannerism', 'Royal Art' and finally, 'The Cabinet and the Gallery'.<sup>120</sup>

The first histories of the cabinet appeared during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, of which the earliest 'dedicated' publication is often cited as Austrian art historian Julius von Schlosser's short but influential *Die Kunst- und-Wunderkammern der Spätrenaissance* of 1908.<sup>121</sup> Lavishly illustrated with images of objects and collections, this foundational text attempted to chart the origins and development of cabinets as a collecting practice, and examined a number of early collections, including Emperor Rudolf II's sixteenth-century cabinet in Prague, the remains of which are now housed in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, where von Schlosser was a curator.

Descriptions of collections in early histories of the museum often served to entrench and perpetuate the popular image of the curiosity cabinet as chaotic, irrational and bizarre.<sup>122</sup>

While von Schlosser considered Rudolf II to be in many ways representative of the tastes

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<sup>119</sup> Marr, 'Introduction', in *Curiosity and Wonder*, p. 9.

<sup>120</sup> Bazin, *The Museum Age*.

<sup>121</sup> Julius von Schlosser, *Die Kunst- und-Wunderkammern der Spätrenaissance: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Sammelwesens* (Leipzig: Klinkhardt und Biermann, 1908).

<sup>122</sup> For an account of seventeenth-century satire on English collectors who took collecting to what was perceived to be absurd extremes, see Claire Preston, 'The Jocund Cabinet and the Melancholy Museum in Seventeenth-Century English Literature', in *Curiosity and Wonder from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, ed. by Robert Evans and Alexander Marr (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 87-106.

and preoccupations of Northern European collectors, he also described Rudolf's mental state as 'abnormal', and argued that this was in part evidenced by the Emperor's predilection for collecting 'absurdities'.<sup>123</sup> While increasingly less common, traces of these older views do survive, particularly where scholars harness the cabinet as a vehicle for conveying the notion of progress, or 'evolution' in museums. In Stephen T. Asma's discussion of the emergence of the contemporary natural history museum, for example, Asma, a philosopher of life sciences, downplays the serious intent of many early modern collections by focussing on the most 'lurid' and 'freakish' specimens of Peter the Great of Russia's (1672-1725) collection.<sup>124</sup> In so doing, a contemporary photograph of a crowded shop display becomes analogous to a curiosity cabinet based on Asma's assumptions of the cabinet's lack of scientific purpose. Thus, the shop is perceived to comprise 'a chaotic display that harks back to the curiosity cabinets of premodern Europe'.<sup>125</sup>

However, some early authors on the subject expressed very different views about the cabinet. David Murray's three-volume 1904 publication *Museums: Their History and their Use*, for example, posits the curiosity cabinet as the forerunner of 'the modern museum',<sup>126</sup> but observes that

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<sup>123</sup> See von Schlosser, *Die Kunst- und-Wunderkammern*, p. 90. For a later interpretation of von Schlosser's statements in English, see Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, 'Remarks on the Collections of Rudolf II: The Kunstkammer as a Form of *Representatio*', in *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum*, ed. by Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004 [1978]), p. 526.

<sup>124</sup> Stephen T. Asma, *Stuffed Animals and Pickled Heads: The Culture and Evolution of Natural History Museums* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 4.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>126</sup> David Murray, *Museums: Their History and their Use, With a Bibliography and List of Museums in the United Kingdom*, 3 vols (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1904), I, p. 231.

Some of the exhibits of the old museums – unicorn’s horns, giants’ bones, petrified toad-stools and the like – strike us as extraordinary, but they were placed there in accordance with the opinions and teaching of the time. Our point of view is so different that we are inclined to look upon much of the material of the old collection as rubbish, and it is apt to be so treated by keepers only interested in the current views of museum management, but this is a mistake.<sup>127</sup>

Murray goes on to argue that such objects and collections are not only of intrinsic interest to historians of science, but that early collections are also valuable because they enable us to question the very idea of the museum itself, its selection of material and modes of organisation.<sup>128</sup>

In spite of these pioneering early studies, and a steady trickle of published material subsequently, the cabinet did not become more than a ‘niche’ historical interest until the late twentieth century. The first stirrings of renewed scholarly interest in the cabinet came during the 1970s and 1980s. During this period, a number of seminal publications arose from events and symposia, including *The Origins of Museums*, Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor’s edited volume of essays.<sup>129</sup> Moreover, following the publication of her book on early modern encyclopaedic collecting, *Naturalia et Mirabilia* in 1983, a study which also considered some of the connections between cabinets of curiosity and modern art,<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Murray, *Museums*, p. 39.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>129</sup> Impey and MacGregor, *The Origins of Museums*.

<sup>130</sup> Besson, ‘From Marvels to Curiosity’, p. 2.

art historian Adalgisa Lugli<sup>131</sup> organised an art exhibition at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Venice Biennale on the theme of *Wunderkammer*<sup>132</sup> in 1986. Dedicated journals also began to emerge under the aegis of museum and collecting history, such as the *Journal of the History of Collections*, edited by Arthur MacGregor and Kate Heard, whose first issue appeared in 1989.<sup>133</sup>

From the 1980s onwards, the work of Arthur MacGregor and Paula Findlen has been particularly influential, often providing more nuanced accounts than tend to be found in earlier studies, and have been credited with sparking a nascent interest in early collections.<sup>134</sup> Key texts on the history of the museum include Findlen's *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (1994), a detailed account of natural historical collecting practice in sixteenth-century Italy, and historian and curator MacGregor's *Curiosity and Enlightenment: Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century* (2007), a comprehensive survey of collecting practice throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which also extends this beyond the cabinet and into comparable cultural practices from antiquity to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Both remain among the most seminal works on the curiosity cabinet of the past two decades; however, their conceptualisation of the cabinet as a nascent museum is somewhat limited.

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<sup>131</sup> Adalgisa Lugli, *Naturalia et Mirabilia: Il Collezionismo Enciclopedico nelle Wunderkammern d'Europa* (Milan, 1983).

<sup>132</sup> Christian Besson, trans. by Simon Pleasance, 'From Marvels to Curiosity', in *Critique d'Art*, 22 (2003), 1-5 (p. 4).

<sup>133</sup> *Journal of the History of Collections* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1989 - present.

<sup>134</sup> Marr, 'Introduction', in *Curiosity and Wonder*, p. 10.

For instance, MacGregor's grand survey is limited by its very scope, and therefore does little to analyse the different types of collections he describes further and explain how they were able to create meaning for the beholder during the period in which they operated. MacGregor's text is arranged, like Bazin's, in chronological order, charting an inexorable path from antiquity to the nineteenth century, in which cabinets represent just one stage in the metamorphosis of the contemporary museum.

MacGregor's text is also comparable to Carla Yanni's *Nature's Museums* (1999). While Yanni, an architectural historian, does an excellent job of 'seeing' the cabinet through Victorian eyes, she falls into the same trap when she argues that 'In the *Wunderkammer*, displays of nature were used to facilitate learning. At this fundamental level, the cabinet of curiosities is the necessary precursor to nineteenth-century museums'.<sup>135</sup> In fact, Yanni's statement is somewhat reductionist, as she presumes that not only was the *Wunderkammer* part of a homogenous practice, but that it 'facilitated' the same kind of learning, and for the same audiences, as the Victorian museum, which is clearly not the case. Yanni also draws upon Michel Foucault's (1926-1984) *The Order of Things* in order to claim – illogically – that despite being situated within changing paradigms of meaning, the cabinet might have 'a different system of classification and still illustrate the origins of museums'.<sup>136</sup> While there were undoubtedly links between the cabinet and the museum, here Yanni ignores the fact that the primary task of the cabinet was not to 'classify' the world as such, simplifying

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<sup>135</sup> Carla Yanni, *Nature's Museums: Victorian Science and the Architecture of Display* (London: The Athlone Press, 1999), p. 20.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

and appropriating it as part of a grand narrative of collecting to which it does not necessarily belong.

In a similar vein, the art historian Douglas Crimp has argued that there is no connection between the museum and the cabinet, which again overstates the case:

Anyone who has ever read a description of a *Wunderkammer*, or *cabinet des curiosités*, would recognise the folly of locating the origin of the museum there, the utter incompatibility of the *Wunderkammer's* selection of objects, its system of classification, with our own.<sup>137</sup>

Other key texts, such as Findlen's, offer a more precise and thoughtful analysis of the cabinet's practice as a form of cultural performance tied to the person of the collector, as well as to its particular incarnations in temporal and geographic localities. In *Possessing Nature*, Findlen delivers a tightly-focussed examination of early Italian natural historical collections which places these collections in their appropriate cultural, social and intellectual contexts and considers how and why they constructed meaning. However, her use of the word 'museum' is an uneasy one, and implicit within her work is the desire to locate the emergence of the museum as we understand it today within these early collections,<sup>138</sup> reflecting the general tendency in museological literature to look for 'museum-like' aspects of the cabinet on what is sometimes a fairly superficial level.

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<sup>137</sup> Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins*, p. 225.

<sup>138</sup> Findlen, *Possessing Nature*, p. 15.



Furthermore, textbooks which discuss in detail the manner in which collections were thought to construct meaning, and go beyond the rather ubiquitous ‘microcosm’ model are equally unusual. As Eilean Hooper-Greenhill has observed, where discussions of cabinets operating under the aegis of a central concept such as the microcosm do appear, these tend to be ‘taken as a given and [...] not questioned or explained’.<sup>139</sup> An exception is Foucault who famously considered the nature of resemblance, similitude and the microcosm in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century understanding of the world in *The Order of Things*, but while this thesis has been informed to a certain extent by Foucauldian theory, I use it only sparingly as while undoubtedly relevant, it has perhaps been over-employed with reference to the early modern curiosity cabinet.<sup>140</sup>

Social and cultural historians Daniela Bleichmar and Peter Mancall in their study of early modern collecting activity in Europe and beyond, argue that so far scholarship on the cabinet has limited itself to certain areas of focus, for:

studies of early modern cabinets have paid scant attention to issues of display and viewership – to the questions of looking and of the type of looking that the collection as a space required. This is in stark contrast [...] with the literature on

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<sup>139</sup> Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 82.

<sup>140</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2002 [1970]), pp. 19-38 and 52-79.

contemporary museum studies, which tends to focus on exhibition techniques and visitor's [*sic*] experiences.<sup>141</sup>

This tendency is perhaps truer of earlier material on cabinets, however, and is partly the result of the difficult and fragmentary nature of much evidence pertaining to early modern methods of display and interpretation. Moreover, more recent publications do not, as Bleichmar and Mancall suggest, wholly ignore questions of viewership and the wider sensorial experience of early collections, yet there is perhaps a tendency to rely upon the same models of interpretation, which has led to a certain stagnation and a tendency, in some cases, for certain studies to lack a sense of the subtlety and diversity of viewing which occurred, and by what concepts it was informed.

While it is not my intention to denigrate the many examples of outstanding research on the historical cabinet, and to which this research project is indebted, I observe that early collections have often been treated as bygone and irrelevant means of representing the world, when, in fact, the cabinet has demonstrably continued to haunt the artistic and intellectual imagination on a grand scale throughout the nineteenth, twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.<sup>142</sup> In particular, there has been a resurgence of artistic as well as scholarly interest in the cabinet from the early 1980s onwards which has seen spectral variants on the early modern collection emerge within the contemporary art gallery and museum. This renewed interest in the cabinet may also be observed in the re-presentation

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<sup>141</sup> Daniela Bleichmar and Peter C. Mancall, *Collecting Across Cultures: Material Exchanges in the Early Modern Atlantic World* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), p. 21.

<sup>142</sup> See James Putnam, *Art and Artifact: The Museum as Medium* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001), and Endt, 'Reopening the Cabinet of Curiosities'.

of the museal 'self', through events such as the Ashmolean's tercentenary conference in 1983, in which the contemporary museum is genealogised as an evolutionary progression from the days of the cabinet.

Connections between the early modern cabinet and contemporary art have been made before, notably by James Putnam and Stephen Bann. Art historian and curator James Putnam has written on the reappearance and importance of the cabinet in the work of contemporary artists. Putnam has described this trend as 'an emerging museological tendency in art which is matched by the use of the traditional museum as a site for artists' interventions', which, he argues, result from 'a passion for the unique visual poetry of the museum and an interest in examining its institutional role'.<sup>143</sup> Here, Putnam appears to blur the boundaries which arguably lie between the museum and the curiosity cabinet, with the implication that such terms are more or less interchangeable. However, he also implies that visual art, contemporary or otherwise, is intrinsic to the nature of the display of collections, whatever form that collection takes, and whatever its forum for display.

For many artists, the distinct visual language of the early modern cabinet and to some extent the contemporary museum, particularly where the original appearance of a collection has been preserved, constitutes an art form in and of itself which can be harnessed to create new levels and constellations of meaning.<sup>144</sup> During the past two decades, however, a number of art historians and museologists have postulated nothing less than a conscious

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<sup>143</sup> Putnam, *Art and Artifact*, p. 7.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

return or *ricorso* to ‘curiosity’<sup>145</sup> in a manner which transcends the purely visual and which instead touches upon deep-seated epistemological concerns in contemporary art and the museum.

Attempts to harness both modern and contemporary art as a lens on the early modern curiosity cabinet include Marion Endt’s (now Endt-Jones’) 2008 PhD thesis, *Reopening the Cabinet of Curiosities: Nature and the Marvellous in Surrealism and Contemporary Art*. Endt-Jones, an interdisciplinary scholar of modern languages, literature and art history, focuses chiefly upon the concepts of ‘curiosity’ and the ‘marvellous’ as they were understood in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, about which a great deal has been written in recent years, and their re-interpretation by Surrealist artists in particular. Endt-Jones’ thesis is organised according to certain key themes which she perceives to be seminal to the production of both Surrealist art and the cabinet, such as metamorphosis and mimicry and deviation and transgression, which she further narrows down to certain key objects which fulfilled the same criteria in both media, such as insects for the first category and beasts and monsters for the second.

For the shorter, contemporary section, Endt-Jones employs a case-study approach with which to examine the most relevant artworks and museum collections. While focused, her research is broad in scope, spanning three distinct ‘eras’ of art history, the early modern, the modern and the contemporary. Endt-Jones draws attention to the relevance of the cabinet to

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<sup>145</sup> Stephen Bann, ‘The Return to Curiosity: Shifting Paradigms in Contemporary Museum Display’, in *Art and its Publics: Museum Studies at the Millennium*, ed. by Andrew McClellan (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 117-130 (p. 118).

both contemporary artistic and museological theory and practice, and states that her research into the revival of interest in the cabinet in both sectors

is based on the premise that this trajectory is not informed by pure visual fascination and attraction to curious objects or the display method of juxtaposition, but that it is grounded in shared epistemological concerns which thoroughly echo in contemporary practice.<sup>146</sup>

However, Endt-Jones' primary focus is upon the legacy of the curiosity cabinet as it relates to modern, and to a lesser extent, contemporary art practice,<sup>147</sup> whereas the balance of this thesis is weighted in favour of the historical cabinet, and its correlations with contemporary art. Moreover, Endt-Jones focuses almost exclusively on those artworks which clearly reference the cabinet, whereas this thesis extends this argument to contend that such references operate on a more subtle level than previously thought.

More recent publications such as Katy Barrett's 2014 article 'A Sense of Wonder',<sup>148</sup> demonstrate how the reappearance of the cabinet in contemporary art practice is still a matter for debate, as well as illustrating the more nuanced direction in which scholarship on the cabinet is taking, from the broad, sweeping historical survey to the tightly-focussed article which attempts to broach the cabinet as a contemporary as well as a historical phenomenon. While her primary focus is on contemporary exhibition design as seen through the lens of 'wonder', Barrett briefly considers the nature of the appeal of the

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<sup>146</sup> Endt, 'Reopening the Cabinet', pp. 7-8.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>148</sup> Katy Barrett, 'A Sense of Wonder', in *Apollo*, 17, no. 617 (2014), 54-58.

cabinet to contemporary artists such as Damien Hirst, whose work, she argues, makes ‘the kinds of connections to biblical, allegorical and humanist ideas with which an early-modern collector would have been completely comfortable’,<sup>149</sup> and thus transcends the visual. Yet, as Barrett affirms, cabinets of curiosity will always be ‘hard to grasp’ intellectually, and in her conclusion she directs her reader towards early modern thought systems as a further means of analysing the nature of the connection between cabinets and contemporary art.<sup>150</sup> These systems are not stated, however, and Barrett retains the museological tendency to appeal to the ‘eccentric’ nature of early modern collections and collectors.

In conclusion, it is tempting to suggest that the revival of both scholarly and artistic interest in the practices of the early modern collector from the 1990s onwards coincides with and is related to a transitional period in terms of knowledge production in which the time was ripe to rethink conceptions of the world and its expression through material things. The palimpsestual need to re-conceptualise the contemporary by revivifying the past is accompanied by a desire to experiment with materiality, and to reconfigure its relationship with the abstract world of ideas and representations. It is perhaps this tendency which has led scholars to explore the world of the cabinet anew, and apply its precepts to collecting activity today. Nevertheless, it does not necessarily follow that scholars should limit themselves to a single interpretive perspective, or that this perspective should continue to be fed by decontextualised and anachronistic notions of early modern collections. This research contends that the traditional museal framework is, historiographically speaking, an

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<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

outmoded one with which to examine the cabinet, and that the recent resurgence of interest in the cabinet is in itself worthy of study and points to new modes of understanding and directions for future research.

The next chapter will draw upon a new translation of a sixteenth-century articulation of an ideal collection in order to explore some of the governing concepts of curiosity cabinets, and how these might have operated in practice. In so doing, it is possible to build a solid basis from which to approach the contemporary 'cabinet', which also has implications for how the historical cabinet is understood, framed and, ultimately, how it may be re-thought.

## Chapter Two

### The Logic of the Cabinet: Concepts and Categories

I reckon [...] that in fact eloquence can be uttered from no human being [...] as out of the inspection and study of images and things, which we put in order and are able to compare.

Samuel Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones Vel Tituli Theatri Amplissimi*, 1565<sup>151</sup>

During the first half of the sixteenth century, there existed few detailed written guidelines on *how* to arrange and organise a collection of physical objects. Collectors sometimes drew upon historical precedents – well-known collectors from classical antiquity or from the Bible – whose repositories were described in textual form, or upon ancient models of categorising the world, such as those set out by Pliny the Elder (AD 23-79) in his *Historia Naturalis*, or *Natural History*, of AD 77-79.<sup>152</sup> While accounts of contemporary collecting activity abounded in the form of catalogues, inventories, images and visitors' diaries and correspondence, these were nearly always particular to a specific collection and rarely elaborated upon the concepts or theoretical models which underpinned collecting practice

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<sup>151</sup> Samuel Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Antonio Leonardis, pp. 26-7.

<sup>152</sup> See Findlen, *Possessing Nature*, p. 57, and MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 2.



in general.<sup>153</sup> Early writing on the subject was, then, primarily confined to *descriptions* of collections, both known and imaginary, extant and vanished. While such materials are of undoubted value to historians, a notable exception is furnished by Samuel Quiccheberg's 1565 *Inscriptions or Titles of the Most Complete Theatre*, the earliest known treatise on how to establish, order and arrange a collection in the early modern period. This text was intended, unusually, not as the companion piece to an existing collection, but as a practical guide and primer for the contemporary collector who might use Quiccheberg's precepts to build a collection worthy of notice.

This chapter explores some of the central concepts which lay behind the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century curiosity cabinet and which arguably governed its selection and display of materials. In particular, it will focus upon the nature of the category in early modern thought, drawing upon Quiccheberg's thesis to illustrate how categories were both constructed and performed within early modern collecting practice. Crucially, Quiccheberg's text articulates five categories of collecting activity and this chapter explores how these may be understood philosophically as predicates of worldly phenomena, and how they operated in relation to one another. This chapter will also demonstrate how an understanding of Quiccheberg's categories may be used to interpret and frame collecting

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<sup>153</sup> An exception is artist Gabriel Kaltermack's (? – c. 1610) *Thoughts on how a kunstkammer should be formed*, presented to the Elector Christian I of Saxony in 1587. Kaltermack's objective was to persuade Christian I to establish an art collection, with a particular emphasis on sculpture and paintings, and he makes an important case for the collecting of contemporary art. However, this treatise is considerably shorter, narrower in focus and less systematic than Quiccheberg's. See Pearce and Arnold, *The Collector's Voice*, pp. 12-16, and Barbara Gutfleisch and Joachim Menzhausen, 'How a Kunstkammer Should be Formed', in *Journal of the History of Collections*, 1.1 (1989), 3-32.

practices as acts of assemblage and performance, through an examination of the seventeenth-century Augsburg Art Cabinet.

Before examining Quiccheberg's treatise, it will be necessary to briefly consider the context in which it was produced and the author's motives for writing it, as well as his connections with existing collections. The following section will then examine the influence and historical value of the *Inscriptiones*, specifically: how far this text may be considered to be indicative of broader trends in collecting activity during the sixteenth century, and what evidence there is to support this.

### Samuel Quiccheberg

*Alas, Samuel, which fields your meditation has travelled to,  
You join together materials almost with no end.  
Here sacred images, places; here insignia, maps, [...]  
If so much praise [...] for the study of coins alone arises,  
How much glory ought there to be for our Quicchelberg,  
Who collects innumerable kinds of things?*

Gabriel Casterni, from a dedicatory poem to Samuel Quiccheberg,  
*Inscriptiones Vel Tituli Theatri Amplissimi*, 1565<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 63. Gabriel Casterni, or Castner, was a schoolmaster based at St. Florian's school in Munich from 1559-71. Casterni's poem compares Quiccheberg's endeavour favourably with that of Hubert Goltzius (1526-83), an eminent collector of coins, as well as a cataloguer of coin collections. See Meadow, *The First Treatise*, p. 131, and p. 11.

Samuel Quiccheberg, or sometimes Quicchelberg (1529-1567),<sup>155</sup> is a somewhat shadowy figure in early modern history. Relatively little is known about his life, but what is certain is that he was a Flemish physician, librarian and custodian of collections, who had travelled quite extensively around Europe. As a result, he was familiar with many of the seminal collections of the sixteenth century, including those of Ulisse Aldrovandi in Bologna<sup>156</sup> and Conrad Gesner<sup>157</sup> in Zurich, both of which Quiccheberg had visited in person. Quiccheberg was, therefore, also personally known to many collectors, artists and patrons of culture. As Casterni's flattering poem notes, Quiccheberg possessed a talent for joining different materials together, and certainly Quiccheberg's medical training did not preclude him from investigating other matters.<sup>158</sup> Prior to the publication of the *Inscriptiones* in 1565, Quiccheberg had also contributed to the authorship of two volumes on music: an illuminated manuscript on the motets of Cipriano de Rore (c. 1515-1565) in 1559,<sup>159</sup> and a book of commentaries on the same in 1564.<sup>160</sup> Quiccheberg's collaborator for the first

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<sup>155</sup> Bavarian State Library Catalogue, 2013.

<sup>156</sup> Quiccheberg mentions visiting Aldrovandi's (1522-1605) collection as a young man in the *Inscriptiones*. See Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 35. Aldrovandi was a natural philosopher and one of the most seminal collectors of the sixteenth century. He owned a vast collection of natural specimens, many of which were also reproduced in illustrated texts. See Findlen, *Possessing Nature*, pp. 67-9.

<sup>157</sup> Gesner was also a natural philosopher, and published many books on the natural world. See Findlen, 'The Modern Muses', p. 163.

<sup>158</sup> Findlen suggests that by the seventeenth century, physicians actively sought to emulate the practices of collectors, by travelling to foreign lands, visiting collections and amassing their own collections. See Findlen, *Possessing Nature*, pp. 159-160.

<sup>159</sup> Now considered to be one of the most influential composers of the sixteenth century, Cipriano de Rore was a Flemish composer at the court of Albrecht V. Blanche Gangwere, *Music History During the Renaissance Period, 1520-1550: A Documented Chronology* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), p. 96.

<sup>160</sup> Meadow, 'Introduction', p. 12.

volume was the German artist Hans Mielich (1516-1573), court painter to Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria.

Quiccheberg was not only well-educated and travelled; he also possessed considerable practical experience of managing collections on behalf of wealthy clients. In 1557, Quiccheberg was employed to manage the sizeable library and collection of the Fugger family in Augsburg,<sup>161</sup> devising a cataloguing system for the Fugger library, upon which system the *Inscriptiones* were partly based.<sup>162</sup> A version of this system was later implemented in Munich, at the library of Albrecht V.<sup>163</sup> It is worth briefly delineating some of the key features of Albrecht's collection, as there is strong evidence to suggest that it helped shape Quiccheberg's thinking when he wrote his *Inscriptiones*.

Albrecht's well-documented collection was divided into four parts, each of which was housed in a different building, although objects sometimes moved between them. The collection comprised a *schatzkammer*, or treasure chamber, containing works of contemporary art,<sup>164</sup> a *kunstkammer*, or art chamber, the primary site of collecting activity,

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<sup>161</sup> A family of bankers, the Fuggers are an interesting example of a mercantile family whose collecting activities directly influenced those of German princes such as Albrecht V.

<sup>162</sup> Mark A. Meadow, 'Hans Jacob Fugger and the Origins of the Wunderkammer', in *Merchants and Marvels: Commerce, Science, and Art in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Pamela Smith and Paula Findlen (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 192.

<sup>163</sup> Albrecht acquired much of the Fugger library and collection on the bankruptcy of Hans Jacob Fugger in 1563. See Meadow, 'Introduction', p. 10. Quiccheberg was in the employ of Albrecht V by 1559, and may have also served as his artistic advisor. See Meadow, 'Introduction', p. 11, and Pearce and Arnold, *The Collector's Voice*, p. 6.

<sup>164</sup> These treasures were for the most part jewellery and goldsmith's work set with precious stones, all of which were contemporary, and many of which had been commissioned by Albrecht himself. It was Albrecht's wish that these treasures be considered inalienable heirlooms of the Dukes of Bavaria in perpetuity, clearly demonstrating how princely collecting activity in the sixteenth century was allied to identity-building as well as power and prestige.

built between 1563 and 1567, an *antiquarium*, containing classical sculptures and casts and a library.<sup>165</sup> Of these, the *kunstkammer* was the newest addition, and was housed in its own, purpose-built facility (Figure 5).<sup>166</sup>



Figure 5:

**Though substantially altered over the centuries, this Munich building on Hofgraben 4 once housed the art collections of Albrecht V of Bavaria. Now known as the courtyard of the Old Mint, the central quadrangle flanked by walkways are an original feature of architect Berhard Zwitzel's (1496-1570) design for Albrecht's *kunstkammer*. By kind permission of and © Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege.**

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<sup>165</sup> Seelig, 'The Munich *Kunstkammer*', p. 102.

<sup>166</sup> See Eva Schulz, 'Notes on the History of Collecting and of Museums', in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. by Susan Pearce (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 176, Seelig, 'The Munich *Kunstkammer*', p. 101, and Meadow, 'Quiccheberg and the Copious Object', p. 48.

The *kunstkammer* contained a diverse selection of artefacts, including weapons, coins, books, natural historical specimens, historical and ethnographic objects, paintings and sculptures. Individual and especially valuable objects in the *kunstkammer* were displayed under glass covers on small, square tables or *Tischl*, and long rectangular tables, or *Tafeln*, hosted displays of multiple objects, sometimes according to a particular theme (Figure 6).<sup>167</sup> Like many princely cabinets, Albrecht's was designed to visually overwhelm the visitor – objects were displayed not only on table tops, but on shelves, floors and suspended from the walls and ceiling. Very few cupboards were used, unlike the Ambras and Prague cabinets, and Seelig implies that this was quite deliberate on the collector's part, to ensure that nothing was hidden from the gaze.<sup>168</sup>

The display strategy appears to have varied from place to place – only a few of the *Tafeln* displayed the same type of material, for example; with others, there was no clearly defined theme as such. However, Seelig notes that the focus of the collection was squarely on the collector himself, which, significantly, was also the primary focus of Quiccheberg's ordering system.

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<sup>167</sup> Seelig, 'The Munich *Kunstkammer*', p. 107.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.

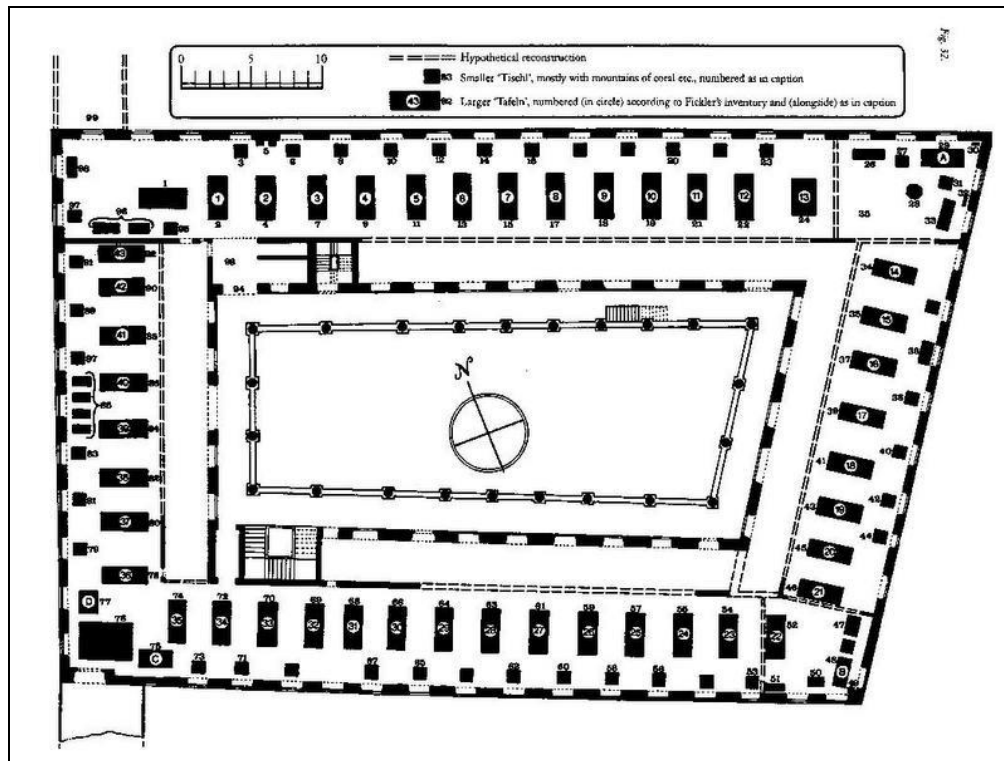


Figure 6:

Lorenz Seelig's hypothetical 1985 reconstruction of the appearance and layout of the *kunstkammer* of Albrecht V in Munich, based on a 1598 inventory by Johann Fickler, a 1611 description by Philipp Hainhofer and an 1807 drawing. The plan shows the layout of the second floor of this purpose-built repository, which housed the entire *kunstkammer* and boasted high ceilings and large windows. The works of greatest value appear to have been placed nearest the windows, whereas works of lesser value were displayed in the gallery nearest the central courtyard. Seelig, 'The Munich Kunstkammer', p. 107.

In his *Inscriptiones*, Quiccheberg directly refers to Albrecht's collection as an exemplar for other collectors to follow. In particular, he praises the generous size and layout of the *kunstkammer*, which, he argues, represents the ideal architectural setting for collecting on a grand scale. Albrecht's *kunstkammer*, Quiccheberg argues, resembles a theatre

on behalf of the great structure, or the arches, or ovals, or for the walkway-structures, whose type in basilicas or encircled monasteries, are called by the inhabitants, constructed with high rafters on four sides, in the middle of which there

is a garden or what is left of a Roman inner courtyard (for in fact it is seen in the skillful techniques of Bavarian theatres), with the total result that four halls to a great degree, and four regions of space lie most wide openly.<sup>169</sup>

As Figures 5 and 6 illustrate, Albrecht V's *kunstkammer* did indeed feature four wings on several floors overlooking a courtyard, and Seelig argues that it was the likely source of Quiccheberg's inspiration.<sup>170</sup> Yet Albrecht's cabinet was unusual in that it was designed to be what might now be described as 'open-plan', with few physical borders between the different types of objects on display so that one visitor in *circa* 1592 remarked that 'In this house you can circulate everywhere as there are no separating walls'.<sup>171</sup>

This lack of segregation between the collections housed in the *kunstkammer* arguably influenced not only the practical and architectural considerations raised by the *Inscriptiones*, but also shaped the development of Quiccheberg's conceptual model itself. Moreover, this tendency extended to the different types of collection Albrecht cultivated apart from the *kunstkammer*. Seelig has speculated that certain objects, such as the books, were included here and not in the court library due to their perceived relevance to the *kunstkammer*.<sup>172</sup> These books, he argues, were not only valued as luxury objects, but for their artistry, as they contained many drawings and engravings, and for their content, which, being largely of an artistic, antiquarian or numismatic nature, complemented the nature of the cabinet. As such, they constituted complex objects which straddled multiple

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<sup>169</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 31.

<sup>170</sup> Seelig, 'The Munich *Kunstkammer*', p. 102.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.



boundaries in terms of their collection and placement in the overall schema. There is thus a certain flexibility, and indeed, porosity of organisation at work here which is also reflected in Quiccheberg's treatise.

Nevertheless, it remains difficult to determine the exact nature of the relationship between Quiccheberg, his 1565 treatise, and Albrecht V's *kunstkammer*. Art historian Horst Bredekamp argues that

Samuel Quiccheberg's "*Inscriptiones vel tutuli* [sic] *theatri amplissimi*" [...] was considered instrumental for setting the parameters for this type of collection.

Though intended as an abstract model, Quiccheberg's ideas were also influenced by the *Kunstkammer* of Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria [...] Quiccheberg was also familiar with Camillo's "Theater of Memory", the great collections in and outside Bavaria, and most of all, those in Italy.<sup>173</sup>

Certainly, Albrecht and his *kunstkammer* are acknowledged quite explicitly in the third chapter of the *Inscriptiones*, and there is some tantalizing evidence to suggest that while presented and intended as an abstract ideal, the ideas present in the *Inscriptiones* and the overall shape of the physical cabinet may have shaped each other to a significant extent.

Historians of the museum such as MacGregor have considered the possibility that Quiccheberg did not work for Albrecht at the time of writing, but had hoped to secure a future position, partly by merit of his publication.<sup>174</sup> However, more recent research carried

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<sup>173</sup> Horst Bredekamp, *The Lure of Antiquity and the Cult of the Machine: The Kunstkammer and the Evolution of Nature, Art, and Technology* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener, 1995), p. 28.

<sup>174</sup> MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 57.

out by Meadow indicates that Quiccheberg was indeed already in the employ of the Duke at the time the work was published. Yet, Meadow asserts, the *Inscriptiones* nevertheless does constitute a form of ‘job application’, through which Quiccheberg hoped to secure his future as manager of Albrecht’s collections.<sup>175</sup>

## Quiccheberg’s influence

As Eva Schulz observes, little is known as to how widely-read Quiccheberg’s thesis was, or how far it was disseminated.<sup>176</sup> It is therefore difficult to determine how influential Quiccheberg’s ideas were. Moreover, in-depth scholarship on Quiccheberg’s treatise is still in its infancy. As early as 1958, Elizabeth Hajós complained that very little material existed on Quiccheberg in English,<sup>177</sup> but fortunately there are promising signs of change. Apart from Meadow and Robertson’s new translation and critical edition, recent articles interpreting Quiccheberg include Koji Kuwakino’s ‘The Great Theatre of Creative Thought’, which provides a detailed analysis of Quiccheberg’s borrowings from Humanist thought and classical philosophy.<sup>178</sup> Some excellent work has also been carried out by

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<sup>175</sup> Meadow draws upon a short biography of Quiccheberg written by Heinrich Pantaleon, which clearly states that Quiccheberg had been in Albrecht’s employ for some years prior to 1565. See Meadow, ‘Introduction’, p. 11.

<sup>176</sup> Eva Schulz, ‘Notes on the History of Collecting and of Museums’, in Susan Pearce, ed., *Interpreting Objects and Collections* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 175–187 (p. 179).

<sup>177</sup> Elizabeth M. Hajós, ‘The Concept of an Engravings Collection in the Year 1565: Quicchelberg, *Inscriptiones vel Tutuli Theatri Amplissimi*’, in *The Art Bulletin*, 40.2 (1958).

<sup>178</sup> Koji Kuwakino, ‘The Great Theatre of Creative Thought: The *Inscriptiones vel tituli theatri amplissimi* ... (1565) by Samuel von Quiccheberg’, in *Journal of the History of Collections*, 25.3 (2013), 303–324.

Lorenz Seelig and Eva Schulz on the practical application of Quiccheberg's ideas within sixteenth-century collecting activity and the interpretation of the text respectively.<sup>179</sup>

Schulz also notes, as have other historians, that while Quiccheberg's text now occupies a place of some prestige as the first 'purely museological' tract,<sup>180</sup> later writers on collecting in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries do not reference Quiccheberg; at least, not directly. Yet Clarissa Orr in her study of the social, cultural and intellectual history of the early modern English court, contends that at least one writer, the collector and physician Johan Damian Major (1636-93), knowingly developed Quiccheberg's ideas further in his *Kunst und Naturalien Kammern* of 1674,<sup>181</sup> described by Arthur MacGregor as the 'first significant museological thesis since that of Quiccheberg'.<sup>182</sup> Major's ideas, Orr argues, were then harnessed to organise collections in the so-called 'Green Vault', Dresden, a kind of combined *kunst* and *schatzkammer*, developed in the early eighteenth century by Augustus the Strong (1670-1733), building upon the foundations of sixteenth-century collecting activity. Thus, there are demonstrable, if sometimes indirect, links between material collections and Quiccheberg's ideas, which were apparently still influencing writers on collecting, and even collecting activity itself, more than a hundred years later.

Were it impossible to provide evidence of this connection, a number of historians have noted that the work is undeniably a valuable illustration of the core ideals which are

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<sup>179</sup> Seelig, 'The Munich *Kunstammer*', and Schulz, 'Notes on the History of Collecting'.

<sup>180</sup> Seelig, 'The Munich *Kunstammer*', p. 111.

<sup>181</sup> Clarissa Orr, *Queenship in Britain, 1660-1837: Royal Patronage, Court Culture, and Dynastic Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 131.

<sup>182</sup> MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 62.

thought to have lain behind collecting activity in the sixteenth century, and that these ideals are borne out in the surviving evidence of how collections were arranged and understood in this period. As to the purported link between Quiccheberg's treatise and the collection at Munich, MacGregor considers that while the work was undoubtedly politically motivated, this does not necessarily undermine the validity of the theories it proposes. The *Inscriptiones*, he argues,

had as its primary motive the intention of attracting the eye of Albrecht V of Bavaria and of securing the curatorship of the ducal collection for its author. While purporting to be an abstract model, it presents a less-than-objective picture due to the unacknowledged but heavy influence exerted on his text by the existing *Kunstammer* at Munich, but none the less it embodies many of the widely acknowledged precepts of the day.<sup>183</sup>

Similarly, for Susan Pearce and Kenneth Arnold, the value of Quiccheberg's text lies in its uniqueness, in particular its attempt to draw the various strands of sixteenth-century collecting activity together into a coherent whole, for

Buildings and collections of the type Quiccheberg outlined, could, by the mid-sixteenth century, already be found in Europe; but his pioneering innovation lay in turning an aristocratic habit into an abstract museological monograph.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 57.

<sup>184</sup> Pearce and Arnold, 'Introduction', in *The Collector's Voice*, pp. xii–xxiii (p. xiii).

Contrary to what many historians of the museum have argued as to the nature of pre-museum collections, Schulz contends that ‘Since the sixteenth century, collections have been amassed with the aim of transmitting information by means of a systematic arrangement of objects’.<sup>185</sup> While this may not be true of all collections, Schulz bases this supposition upon written evidence of systematic thinking, such as Quiccheberg’s text, which, she argues, fulfilled a rising need to ‘perpetuate and disseminate’ this information.

There is nevertheless a rather large problem inherent in describing the text as a ‘museumological’ one, as, quite apart from the twenty-first-century tendency to unthinkingly conflate the terms ‘cabinet’ and ‘museum’, this appears to jar with what Quiccheberg himself wrote about his intentions for the text. Quiccheberg deliberately presented his ideal collection in the form of a theatre,<sup>186</sup> in which the term *musea* was only used to refer to specialist collections which functioned as a part of the larger *theatrum*, deriving from the Greek *theatron*, or, ‘seeing place’.<sup>187</sup> However, Quiccheberg went further, suggesting that even the term ‘theatre’ did not progress his ideal far enough; rather, the ideal collection was an ‘amphitheatre’, a place in which all forms of knowledge were to be performed and enacted from the particular vantage-point of the collector.<sup>188</sup> For Quiccheberg, then, the

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<sup>185</sup> Schulz, ‘History of Collecting’, p. 175.

<sup>186</sup> The term ‘theatre’ was closely allied to the notion of showcasing collections during the early modern period – witness Thomas Moffett’s (1553-1604) *Insectorum, sive, Minimorum animalium theatrum*, or, *Of Insects, or, the theatre of the Smallest creatures*, published in 1634. Quiccheberg explains that his theatre was at once a physical and a conceptual one, mirroring both the structure and ideas of Vitruvius and Camillo. See Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, pp. 25-6.

<sup>187</sup> See William Grange, *A Primer in Theatre History: From the Greeks to the Spanish Golden Age* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2013), p. 74.

<sup>188</sup> Schulz, ‘History of Collecting’, p. 178.

cabinet was the material expression of human knowledge in all its variety, a collection of ways of seeing as much as objects to see.

Nevertheless, in spite of the text's appeal to universality, Schulz has considered that Quiccheberg's vision was peculiar to Northern European collecting activity in the 1500s, for

the model for sixteenth-century collections north of the Alps was not quite that of the Greek *museion* or temple: the amphitheatre or *theatrum* in its original etymological sense had the meaning of 'to look at, to examine', and hence to name. This 'universo teatro' evolved into a model of the universe, in the sense both of a collection of real objects and of an encyclopaedic text. In either case, the purpose was to study and to admire the collection.<sup>189</sup>

A similar idea, that of the model of the universe, is also present in the work of the Italian philosopher Giulio Camillo Delminio (c. 1480-1544), with which Quiccheberg was familiar, and which is referenced in his treatise.<sup>190</sup> Camillo achieved widespread fame in the sixteenth century for his literal construction of another kind of theatre, this time one of memory. In essence a semicircular wooden structure filled with significant words, images, objects and their containers, each occupying a very specific position in the overall schema, Camillo's theatre reversed the traditional mode of spectatorship, placing the objects where

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<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 31.

the audience traditionally sat in an amphitheatre, and the spectator on the stage.<sup>191</sup> Camillo drew inspiration from antique and especially classical notions of the art of memory to devise a physical installation which explored the relationship between the embodied and the abstract, sight and mind, vision and comprehension. Historians have also noted that, unlike Quiccheberg's theatre, there was an hermetic element to Camillo's model which attempted to elicit knowledge of the hidden world, and relied upon numerological and astrological signs and symbols.<sup>192</sup>

Camillo later dictated an outline of his idea to Girolamo Muzio, which was published posthumously in 1550 as *L'Idea del teatro*, or *The Idea of the Theatre*. During his lifetime, Camillo exhibited his theatre in Venice and Paris, which, a contemporary observer noted, took the form of an 'Amphitheatre'.<sup>193</sup> However, Yates has suggested that this was a misinterpretation of Camillo's idea, which was loosely based on the notion of the Vitruvian theatre.<sup>194</sup>

Nevertheless, Findlen contends that there are strong points of confluence between Camillo's ideas and Quiccheberg's proposed theatre, for,

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<sup>191</sup> Pearce and Arnold, *The Collector's Voice*, p. 3. According to Frances Yates, Camillo's theatre 'rises in seven grades or steps, which are divided by seven gangways representing the seven planets. The student of it is to be as it were a spectator before whom are placed the seven measures of the world 'in spettacolo', or in a theatre. And since in ancient theatres the most distinguished persons sat in the lowest seats, so in this Theatre the greatest and most important things will be in the lowest place'. See Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 136. Ken Arnold suggests that the memory theatre 'embodied the idea [...] that knowledge rested on memory and that the act of remembering rested on the mind's ability to 'see''. See Arnold, *Cabinets for the Curious*, p. 194.

<sup>192</sup> Meadow, 'Introduction', in Meadow and Robertson, *The First Treatise*, p. 2.

<sup>193</sup> Yates, *Art of Memory*, p. 136.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 136-7.

Like Camillo's theatre, Quiccheberg's Vitruvian theatre was an imaginary space in which one could become a better Cicero through the flawless manipulation of all forms of knowledge. Collecting and remembering facilitated the control of information that lay at the heart of a well-ordered polity. Both activities contributed to the image of the learned ruler whose wisdom emanated not only from communion with God but also from an active engagement in the production and expansion of the humanist encyclopedia.<sup>195</sup>

The early modern revival of interest in the ideas of the first-century BCE Roman architect and military engineer Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, whose *De Architectura*, or, *On Architecture* (c. 20 BCE) included a lengthy description of Greek and Roman theatrical buildings, contributed to an important development in the manner in which space was conceived in early modern theatres. Unlike the medieval street or church theatre, for example, which had blurred the boundaries between the real and the staged world through their lack of segregation, early modern interpretations of the architecture of the Vitruvian theatre actively drew attention to the artificial nature of this construct, by raising and enclosing the stage, separating the audience from the actors through the addition of proscenium arches, and using these as a framing device to create an image (or model) of the world governed by the newly discovered linear perspective and vanishing point.<sup>196</sup> Ronald Vince argues that

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<sup>195</sup> Findlen, 'The Modern Muses', p. 163.

<sup>196</sup> See Luigi Allegri, trans. by Stanley V. Longman, 'On the Rebirth of Theatre, or of the *Idea* of Theatre, in Humanistic Italy', in Paul Castagno, ed., *Theatrical Spaces and Dramatic Places: The Reemergence of the Theatre*, IV (The University of Alabama Press, 1996), pp. 51- 61 (pp. 58-9).



The point of these structures was not so much to present a theatrical performance but to restrict it, to confine it [...] Renaissance playhouses, whether popular or courtly, contained and imaged the world [...] Courtly theatres shift scenes in an attempt to capture a moment in time and space; characters on the public stages become living emblems valued for their abilities to transform and change. Both actor and playhouse in their self-conscious theatricality are “metatheatricalized,” calling attention to the ephemeral, insubstantial nature of the controlling dramatic and theatrical constructs.<sup>197</sup>

It follows therefore that Quiccheberg’s ideal building for a cabinet, the *kunstkammer* of Albrecht V, resembles not a semicircular amphitheatre but a rectangular theatre on many levels, yet to some extent preserves the idea of the amphitheatre through its positioning of objects in four wings overlooking a courtyard in which a spectator might stand.

In terms of the reliability of Quiccheberg’s text, MacGregor argues that

the declared agendas of early catalogues can be deceptive if we try to use them as guides to the physical arrangement of the cabinet, for it is a commonplace that quite different strategies might be adopted in ordering the collection in the catalogue from that followed within the museum space. This is perhaps an inevitable consequence of the high premium placed on ambiguity within the *Kunstkammer*, where a variety of classificatory programmes might coexist alongside each other, intersecting on a

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<sup>197</sup> Ronald Vince, ‘Historicizing the Sixteenth-Century Playhouse’, in Castagno, *Theatrical Spaces*, pp. 39-50 (pp. 43-4).

number of complementary planes with a degree of complexity that could hardly be attempted in a single, narrative text.<sup>198</sup>

Yet Quiccheberg's text furnishes the scholar with rather stronger evidence on which to base the most foundational assumptions about the cabinet, precisely because it is not particular to any one collection, but attempts to speak to them all. It is this variety and complexity, and the resulting multiplicity of being and meaning-making that this thesis will consider in its interpretation of Quiccheberg's text.

The *Inscriptiones* therefore has the potential to furnish an apposite lens on collecting activity in multiple times and contexts. Certainly, these have already been successfully applied to individual art objects produced for the cabinet during the Renaissance by Mark Meadow. In his 2005 article, for example, Meadow argues for the importance of epistemological, social and institutional contexts in understanding how early modern collections were organised. Here, he draws heavily on Quiccheberg's theories and uses these to deconstruct a silver writing box created by Wenzel Jamnitzer in *circa* 1560-70, at the time of Quiccheberg's treatise, to show how it inhabited multiple categories, and hence numerous miniature worlds within the constructed world of the cabinet, and is ultimately interpreted as a microcosm of the cabinet's microcosm.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 62.

<sup>199</sup> Meadow, 'Quiccheberg and the Copious Object', pp. 39–58.

## Quiccheberg's *Inscriptiones*

Quiccheberg's treatise has become known, problematically, as the first 'museological' tract,<sup>200</sup> and Quiccheberg himself as the first 'museographer'.<sup>201</sup> Yet Quiccheberg was demonstrably not proposing a museum, but rather a collecting, display and organisational strategy particular to the sixteenth-century courtly German context in which he was writing. Quiccheberg's text presents a brief, but detailed plan for an ideal collection – what it should contain, and how it should be arranged and displayed, as well as providing examples of contemporary collections in Europe which might be considered as exemplars. This plan centres on a collection of rare objects, but also advocates the deployment of satellite complexes such as workshops and libraries which would guide and enrich the main collection.

While it is probable that this text was aimed at Albrecht V and other princely collectors, Quiccheberg also allows for collectors with more limited financial resources at their disposal. He also emphasises the practicality of his proposal, in that a collection should be an asset to the State, useful in many ways, rather than dealing in knowledge of the more esoteric kind.

The Berg edition of the *Inscriptiones* comprises an octavo volume of 64 pages, divided into six distinct sections. It contains no illustrations or diagrams besides a series of eight decorated initials at the start of each major section of the work, some of which are

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<sup>200</sup> Seelig, 'The Munich *Kunstammer*', p. 111.

<sup>201</sup> Findlen, *Possessing Nature*, p. 137.

‘inhabited’, that is, featuring human or animal characters, but with no identifiable narrative.<sup>202</sup> Quiccheberg intended his treatise to be the precursor to a much larger work, mentioned in the text,<sup>203</sup> which unfortunately does not appear to have transpired, most likely due to the author’s illness and death just two years after the publication of the *Inscriptiones*, in 1567. This section offers an analysis of Quiccheberg’s thesis, focusing on the first chapter, in which the researcher presents a brief overview of his system of ordering, as well as considering how this system has been interpreted by contemporary scholars.

Quiccheberg’s *Inscriptiones* opens with a title page (Figure 7), which functions as an abstract for his treatise in which he sets out his vision and purpose in devising his ‘theatre’. It therefore provides a logical starting place for the contemporary scholar.

Antonio Leonardis has translated the full title of the work as follows:

Important Inscriptions or titles of the Theatre

Embracing all universal things and individual subjects and extraordinary images. So that one can also likewise be named correctly: of skilfully-made cupboards and miraculous objects, and of everything, rare treasures and valuable furniture and decorated structures.

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<sup>202</sup> These tiny decorated initials bear vines and arabesques, and, at times, cherubim. The British Library, Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts, Glossaries, ‘Inhabited initial’, 2012.

<sup>203</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, pp. 28-9.

And for these things together which are here consulted to be collected in the theatre,  
so that, by frequent inspection and management of these things, and individually,  
some knowledge and remarkable wisdom, can be established quickly and easily and  
safely.<sup>204</sup>

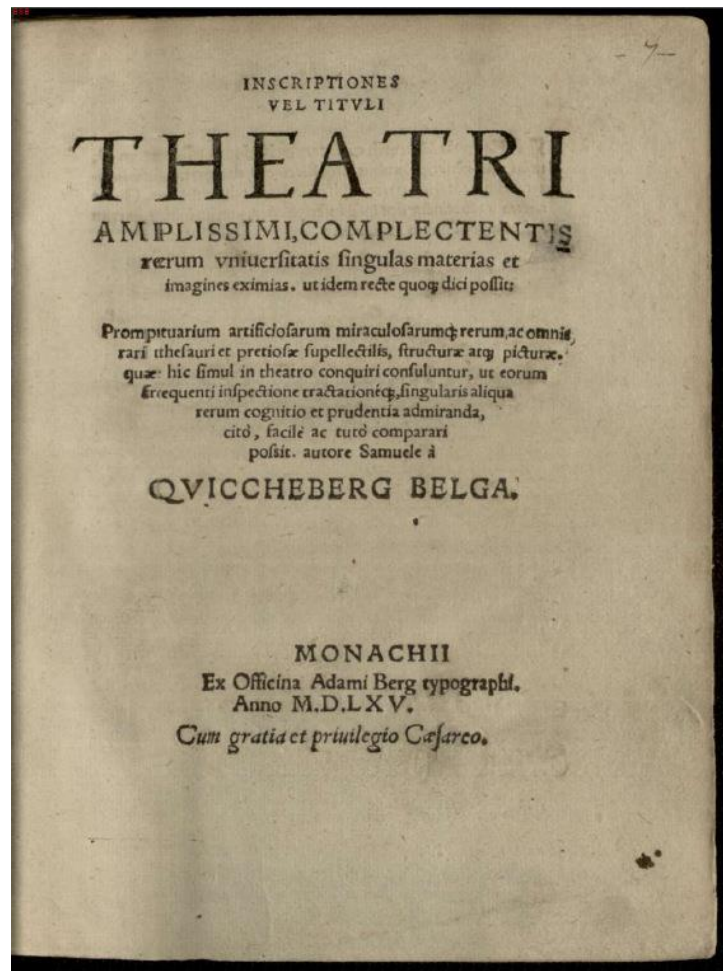


Figure 7:

Title page of Quiccheberg's *Inscriptiones Vel Tituli Theatri Amplissimi* (Munich: Adam Berg, 1565), describing the nature and purpose of the ideal sixteenth-century collection. Bavarian State Library, Munich, MS VD16 Q 63, shelfmark Res/4 H.eccl. 455#Beibd.7, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>. By kind permission of and © Bavarian State Library, Munich.

<sup>204</sup> Quiccheberg, trans. by Leonardis, *Inscriptiones*, p. 1.

What is particularly striking about Quiccheberg's title, apart from the ambitious scope of the proposed theatre, is its articulation of the nature and purpose of early collections. The collection is not termed a 'cabinet' or a 'museum', but a 'theatre' like Camillo's, and is compared to a reference book or compendium of all knowledge.<sup>205</sup> Yet this ideal collection does not necessarily privilege textual, or even visual learning. It should contain objects as well as images, it should be handled as well as seen, and only by experiencing this universal theatre is the 'spectator' at its heart to gain a true knowledge of the world.

Quiccheberg's choice of nomenclature also reflects the early Humanist fascination with ancient inscriptions – words, phrases or texts engraved in Latin and Greek upon stone monuments or other durable materials – and the revival of these practices by Humanist scholars during the late fifteenth century, a practice which Quiccheberg himself describes.<sup>206</sup> During the early fifteenth century, ancient inscriptions were collected in books, but new inscriptions were also composed. As Dirk Sacré observes, these new inscriptions were engraved upon a wide variety of material objects, including sundials, goblets, musical instruments, weapons, jewels and textiles. More importantly, inscriptions

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<sup>205</sup> Quiccheberg does refer to collections such as Albrecht's as museums in the main body of the text. In a letter to Emperor Maximilian II from Leo Quiccheberg, Samuel's brother, promoting the first draft of the text in 1565, the proposed collection is named as a *Kunstwunderkammer*. Leo Quiccheberg, 'Preface Dedicated to Emperor Maximilian II', trans. by Mark Meadow, in Meadow and Robertson, *The First Treatise*, pp. 58-9 (p. 58).

<sup>206</sup> Dirk Sacré, 'Inscriptions', in *Brill's Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World*, Micropaedia, ed. by Philip Ford, Jan Bloemendal, and Charles Fantazzi, (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2014), pp. 994-1007 (pp. 995 and 998), and Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 42.

were also composed for the printed book, and appeared as framing devices in treatises such as Quiccheberg's.<sup>207</sup>

Following the title page, the first chapter sets out the basic tenets of Quiccheberg's ordering system, parts of which he expands upon in later sections.

## **Object categories**

Quiccheberg's first chapter describes the eponymous *Tituli*, or 'Titles', of his system. Each title represents a unique class of objects, and Quiccheberg uses these to divide all known and collectible artefacts into five distinct categories. Each category comprises ten or eleven 'inscriptions', or titled subcategories, which list the individual objects in that category. The five classes and their inscriptions are numbered, but not named,<sup>208</sup> which has prompted some scholars to devise their own names for them, based upon the objects they contain. This, however, has led to a great deal of disagreement as to how these classes are to be interpreted and understood, both individually and in relation to one another, particularly where a type of object appears to inhabit several categories simultaneously. While it is at times difficult to determine which contemporary interpretations are the most in keeping with Quiccheberg's original vision, there is convincing evidence to support the theory that

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<sup>207</sup> Sacré, 'Inscriptions', p. 996.

<sup>208</sup> See Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, pp. 31-41. While it appears that Quiccheberg names his classes in his third chapter, the 'Digressions', he in fact merely repeats the name of the first object in each class.

Quiccheberg deliberately built a certain flexibility of purpose into his system which could be adapted according to the individual collector's knowledge, interests and specialisms.<sup>209</sup>

At times in the *Inscriptions*, Quiccheberg also adds some brief advice as to how a particular object might be displayed, or particular features to look out for when selecting objects for display. For example, in the fifth inscription of the third class, devoted largely to natural objects, Quiccheberg advises the collector to display

Seeds, fruits, legumes, grains, roots [...] and things that are called material to this class, provided that they are suitable for preservation and nice to look at, either for the sake of the variety of their nature, or the diversity of their nomenclature, and here maybe you would want to give preference to those which are from foreign countries, or are amazing, or are fragrant.<sup>210</sup>

As Pearce and Arnold have observed, Quiccheberg's recommendations frequently pay attention to how the collector might craft a memorable experience for the visitor to his or her theatre, with a particular emphasis on the multisensory, as well as the remarkable and the exotic.<sup>211</sup> This craftsmanship is also reflected by the presentation of the first chapter itself, as a carefully-selected summary of the highlights of Quiccheberg's system. As such, it is kept deliberately 'pithy and circumscribed' as Quiccheberg described it, for it is here that he wanted his reader 'to understand the overall structure and sweep of the theater

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<sup>209</sup> See Meadow, 'Quiccheberg', pp. 51-2.

<sup>210</sup> Pearce and Arnold, 'Samuel á Quiccheberg's 'Classes'', p. 7.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.



without getting bogged down in details'.<sup>212</sup> Nevertheless, Quiccheberg does expand upon certain of the individual inscriptions later on, marking these with the astronomical symbol for Mercury, which, Meadow argues, plays on the connotations of Mercury as the Roman messenger God, by linking the brief inscriptions to the longer 'message' of the treatise.<sup>213</sup>

This chapter will now consider the classes themselves and their relationship to each other in Quiccheberg's overall system. The names given to each class are drawn from Quiccheberg's own truncated version of the classes as they appear in the fourth section of his treatise, the 'Digressions'.<sup>214</sup>

*The first class: 'Of sacred tablets of historians'*<sup>215</sup>

Quiccheberg's first class launches his proposal with a diverse collection of objects and images relating to the collector, their family, their predecessors in the role they now occupy, and to the realm he or she governs. For MacGregor, who bases his interpretation of the five classes largely upon that of Bredekamp, the first class 'concerns itself with the founder-as-ruler, celebrating the collector and his family [...] and with reference to the wider world to which they relate', such as images of the principal cities of Christendom, depictions of the ceremonies of the royal court, triumphal processions and the art of war.<sup>216</sup> Yet Elizabeth Hajós interprets the first class as descriptive of 'religious art in all media;

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<sup>212</sup> Meadow, 'Introduction', p. 13.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30-46.

<sup>215</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 31.

<sup>216</sup> MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 57.

collections, in the main, of pictorial material, partly relevant to the general history of civilisation, and partly to local or regional history'.<sup>217</sup>

Nevertheless, other commentators such as Meadow have highlighted the limitations of Hajós' definition, and based on their evidence and the translation commissioned here, it is more accurate to state that while the first class does include objects of a religious nature,<sup>218</sup> it essentially deals with establishing the pedigree of the individual collector, or *fundatoris theatri*, the 'founder of the theatre',<sup>219</sup> as well as the scope of their earthly domain, which Quiccheberg, interestingly, refers to as a self-contained 'universe'.<sup>220</sup> This class therefore contains portraits and busts of the collector as well as genealogical material such as family trees and images of the collector's region or territories.

This self-representation is accompanied by visual representations of the natural world, in particular animals, both native to the collector's realm and from further afield, on account of their rarity. The eighth inscription thus comprises 'large-scale pictures of animals: as rarely depicted deer, wild boar, lions, bears, beavers, and fish, both from fresh water as salt water',<sup>221</sup> which, Quiccheberg goes on to suggest, should represent animals from 'whatever region [...] the founder considers memorable [...] or for what otherwise by chance he

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<sup>217</sup> Hajós, 'The Concept of an Engravings Collection', p. 151.

<sup>218</sup> Pamela Smith, *The Body of the Artisan: Art and Experience in the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 300.

<sup>219</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 8.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.* p. 3.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

lacks',<sup>222</sup> suggesting that if the collector was unsuccessful in procuring a physical example of a particular specimen, it could nevertheless be adequately embodied in pictorial form.

However, this class also serves to represent the various interests of the collector beyond his or her own territories, and in so doing, builds a complex network of associations which are at once practical, political, ideological, religious and symbolic. The ninth and tenth inscriptions, for example, comprise architectural models and small machines, including miniature versions of machines 'for the drawing of water, for drilling into wooden beams, for breaking up grains, for hurling posts, for moving ships and for resisting waves',<sup>223</sup> thus representing the collector's interests in architectural construction and design, and in new technologies which could be harnessed to benefit the state. Similarly, the 'painted cities' of the fifth inscription comprise images of other realms described as 'Christian', 'illustrious', or 'famous', or which are simply those cities or houses the collector 'wanted to honour'.<sup>224</sup> Here, a chain of nested representation is begun, in which an image represents a city which represents an idea, which is given meaning and context through its placement within a title within an inscription within Quiccheberg's theatre.

In his concluding remarks, Quiccheberg draws upon key Biblical advocates of universal wisdom such as King Solomon as well as collectors such as King Hezeki'ah, using these exemplars to illustrate that the act of collecting is not only a princely calling, but a virtuous

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<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

one, which serves to glorify God as the creator of the world.<sup>225</sup> In this primary class, then, Quiccheberg's purpose is to literally draw the eye towards not only the collector, but to Christian paragons of virtue, of which the collector is a living ambassador. The sixth inscription, for example, deals with 'Expeditions, wars, sieges, armies in battle-formation, naval battles, and other famous fights [...] in ours or ancient times'.<sup>226</sup> The literal translation of the reasoning behind their inclusion is as follows: 'Which [...] for our glory or merit on account of various [...] events and of matters of Christianity *towards the focus the eyes*'.<sup>227</sup>

Quiccheberg then, like a stage-manager, uses his imagined theatre to direct the viewer's gaze towards persons, events and ideas which are held paramount by the collector, and which might be used to govern collecting activity. Due to the combination of religious and genealogical material in this class, Meadow has named it 'Founder and Creator',<sup>228</sup> and it may be that Quiccheberg intended it as the most important, or at least, the most visible of all the classes, which is indicated by its foremost position in the text. The implication in Quiccheberg's text is that the collector, in creating and presiding over a miniature reflection of the cosmos, was not only the *de facto* God of his or her own micro universe, but was attaining to the highest calling of all – furthering human knowledge of God's creation, a

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<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4 (my emphasis).

<sup>228</sup> Meadow, 'Quiccheberg', p. 50.

thought also enshrined within Pliny, whose *Historia Naturalis* provided a model for many Renaissance collectors to follow.<sup>229</sup>

*The second class: 'Skillfully-made carpentry'*<sup>230</sup>

Quiccheberg's second class is primarily concerned with one of the two principal categories often found in collections of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that of *artificialia*, or the artificial, which possessed a dual connotation as the products of artifice (as opposed to those of the natural world) as well as of artistry. Consequently, this class lists a wide range of objects constructed from a variety of materials and techniques. Among the objects which appear in Quiccheberg's second class are sculpture, furniture, coins, textiles, metalware and glassware, but also objects relating to the production of artisanal pieces, such as units of measurement and patterns for use in copper printing. MacGregor,<sup>231</sup> again following Bredekamp,<sup>232</sup> designates this class as 'arts and crafts', but Hajós notes that this category also comprises objects which would now be understood as archaeological material and 'the applied arts'.<sup>233</sup> In fact, although Quiccheberg describes the third inscription within this class as comprising 'works of arts [*sic*] of every kind',<sup>234</sup> he is using the word 'art' in its sixteenth-century sense as a work of cunning or skill.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Schulz, 'History of Collecting', pp. 175-6.

<sup>230</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 33.

<sup>231</sup> MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 57.

<sup>232</sup> Bredekamp, *The Lure of Antiquity*, p. 29.

<sup>233</sup> Hajós, 'The Concept', p. 152.

<sup>234</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 7.

<sup>235</sup> I shall discuss sixteenth- and seventeenth- century conceptions of art in further detail in the next chapter.

It is worth noting that princely collections such as Albrecht V's tended to contain far more *artificialia* than *naturalia* items.<sup>236</sup> In Albrecht's collection, these primarily took the form of decorative objects which had no intended practical use, such as boxes and vessels classified by material, goldsmiths' work and objects classified by type including cutlery, swords and games. This part of Albrecht's collection also contained paintings and sculpture, which were considered decorative rather than for the purposes of documentation, and a number of archetypal *kunstkammer* objects demonstrating human skill or virtuosity of craftsmanship such as micro-carvings, which included the ubiquitous cherry stone carved with hundreds of miniature faces.<sup>237</sup>

Quiccheberg largely divides his subcategories in this class by type of object, material and technique, and as a result ancient and contemporary works frequently appear together, as they do in the first inscription of the second class, which contains statues 'old and new: of Caesars, of kingdoms, of famous men, of gods, divine will, and of animals'.<sup>238</sup> Here, an important intersection with the first class may be observed, in which statues also appear as a collectible object, but primarily as representations of the collector and his family. These points of connection between categories sharing the same or similar types of object may be observed throughout Quiccheberg's thesis, but are particularly notable in his third class.

Quiccheberg's second category is also underpinned by a notion of the exotic, particularly where he lists items which come from far afield, whose inclusion promotes 'the

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<sup>236</sup> Seelig, 'The Munich *Kunstkammer*', p. 108.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>238</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 7.

understanding of foreign practices and works'.<sup>239</sup> In particular, he lists 'Naturally suited furniture: and on account of appropriate admiration or on account of the rareness, or the place, or the interval of time, for whom they were made'.<sup>240</sup> Thus objects are selected for this class not only on account of the skill of their manufacture, or as the best examples of their type, but according to their perceived rarity, provenance and associations.

Quiccheberg's chief focus in the second class, however, as he articulates in his final inscription, is upon those items which 'contain and exhibit histories, images, insignia, emblems, architectural examples and innumerable forms of evidence for the ingenuity of the founder of the theatre'.<sup>241</sup> Human skill and ingenuity is at the forefront of all collections of *artificialia*, which, regardless of who made them, where and when, collectively serve to represent the collector as the *genius loci* of his or her world, within, beyond and through the collection.

### *The third class: 'Incredible Animals'*

The third class deals primarily with the products of the natural world, from 'marvellous and rather rare animals',<sup>242</sup> to dried herbs, gems and precious stones, as well as human remains, and is the second of the two classes commonly found in collections of this period, often known as *naturalia*. Bredekamp refers to Quiccheberg's third class as 'a systematic presentation of the three kingdoms of nature – animal, vegetable and mineral', and argues

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<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-11.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>242</sup> Pearce and Arnold, 'Samuel á Quiccheberg's 'Classes'', p. 7.

that this was the most developed of all five classes, providing the ‘central focus’ for Quiccheberg’s ordering system.<sup>243</sup> Collecting natural materials was a well-established activity by the sixteenth century, and might rely upon ancient writings such as Pliny’s text which established a well-known system of categorisation dividing the natural world into three realms.<sup>244</sup> Hajós takes a similar view, and argues that this section represents ‘the approximation of a museum of natural history representing original specimens as well as artifacts’.<sup>245</sup>

Far from being comprehensive, however, Quiccheberg’s third class is highly selective, and coloured by his interests in artistry and manufacture which are prominent features of the second class. While Quiccheberg seeks to represent natural specimens which are ‘unusual’, or ‘memorable’, including birds, insects, fish and shells and their parts and pieces in the first and third inscriptions,<sup>246</sup> the other subcategories reveal that he is not only interested in natural materials for themselves, but for what purposes they can be harnessed. Thus, gems and precious stones are included ‘so that they can be introduced into wine goblets, earrings, tiaras, or necklaces’.<sup>247</sup> Natural pigments are listed which might be used for painting,

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<sup>243</sup> Bredekamp, *The Lure of Antiquity*, pp. 29 and 30.

<sup>244</sup> Quiccheberg cites Pliny as an authority on natural matters in his ‘Digressions’. See Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 36.

<sup>245</sup> Hajós, ‘The Concept’, p. 152.

<sup>246</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Meadow and Robertson, pp. 65-6.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.



glazes, or to stain metals.<sup>248</sup> Precious stones include hematite, then believed to possess medicinal properties.<sup>249</sup>

Many historians have noted the blurring of the boundaries between the natural and artificial worlds which takes place in this class. Schulz contends that ‘unaltered nature in the ‘classis tertia’ is opposed to ‘modelled nature’ in the form of manufactured animals of the ‘classis secunda’’.<sup>250</sup> However, neither Pearce and Arnold’s nor Meadow and Robertson’s translation of Quiccheberg’s third class supports this theory. Quiccheberg states quite explicitly that the *naturalia* class should contain not only nature in its unadulterated form, but also artificial materials which mimic or reproduce the natural, such as prostheses for those who have suffered an injury or disfigurement.<sup>251</sup> Quiccheberg’s third class anatomises the natural world, as well as seeking to represent its rarest aspects. Moreover, in the second inscription he recommends the inclusion of

Poured or molded animals: made of metal, plaster, clay and any productive material whatsoever, by whatever technique, which look like they are alive because they have been skillfully fashioned, as for example lizards, snakes, fishes, frogs, crabs, insects, shellfish, and whatever is of that order, and can look real once it is painted.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>250</sup> Schulz, ‘History of Collecting’, p. 177.

<sup>251</sup> Pearce and Arnold, ‘Samuel á Quiccheberg’s ‘Classes’’, p. 7.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*

While it is possible to imagine that the artistic skill required to produce the semblance of life as Quiccheberg proposes might equally relegate such objects to the second, *artificialia* class, Quiccheberg's own reasoning reveals that what an object represents in this class is more important than the materials from which it is made. By the same logic, the paintings of animals in the first class are admired more for their aesthetic merits and symbolic connotations than as accurate chorographic records. In fact, sixteenth-century collectors delighted in the marriage of nature with artifice, and objects featuring casts of flora and faunae taken from life were often found in cabinets of the sixteenth century. In 1594, for example, the English traveller Fynes Moryson recalled seeing 'a piece of Amber falling upon a Lizard, and retaining the lively forme thereof' in the collection of Francesco I.<sup>253</sup> This practice might be compared with the sixteenth-century earthenware platters of Bernard Palissy and his workshop, decorated with natural specimens all cast from life (Figure 8).<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Cited in Ronald Lightbown, 'Charles I and the Tradition of European Princely Collecting', in *The Late King's Goods: Collections, Possessions and Patronage of Charles I in the Light of the Commonwealth Sale Inventories*, ed. by Arthur MacGregor (London and Oxford: Alistair McAlpine in association with Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 53-72 (p. 58).

<sup>254</sup> Meadow, 'Quiccheberg', p. 46.



**Figure 8:**

**An example of an earthenware dish produced by either Bernard Palissy or his followers in France between c. 1580-1620 and decorated with three-dimensional casts of a frog, two lizards and a snake, with seashells and plants. Such objects highlight the sixteenth-century fascination with the relationship between the artificial and the natural. Image © and by kind permission of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, V&A 418-1854.**

Quiccheberg's system of titles and inscriptions therefore promotes a complex understanding of materials and material culture, in which the many nuances of a single object are acknowledged, but in which certain qualities take precedence over others. Quiccheberg's third class represents the cultivation, and hence, the mastery of the natural world. What Quiccheberg proposes is also partly a meditation upon representation and its limits, something which also deeply concerned artists and artisans during this period.

*The fourth class: 'Instruments of the office'*

Quiccheberg's fourth class largely comprises a collection of tools, instruments and devices

<sup>255</sup> although, as shall be observed, this designation is not as simple as it appears.

MacGregor, for example, notes that this class 'combines technological products [...] with anthropological items'.<sup>256</sup> The inclusion of artisanal tools and equipment as objects in their own right should not surprise historians of the cabinet, as there are numerous examples of cabinets such as Albrecht V's which were physically attached or otherwise linked to workshops and collections of tools, many of which were actively used to produce items for the *kunstkammer*. Other collections, such as that of Augustus of Saxony (1526-1586) in Dresden, contained primarily tools, instruments and machines.<sup>257</sup>

The eleven inscriptions in Quiccheberg's fourth class list a variety of implements, organised according to the activities with which they correspond. These objects include musical instruments, sports equipment, hunting accoutrements, gardening equipment, surgical tools, mathematical instruments, writing implements and 'instruments of force', including equipment for heavy lifting and for 'simulating flight',<sup>258</sup> particularly 'if they be clever of design'.<sup>259</sup> Quiccheberg's fourth class can therefore be understood, partly, as an encapsulation of sixteenth-century princely pursuits, influenced by the courtly environment

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<sup>255</sup> Meadow, 'Introduction', in 'The First Treatise', p. 19.

<sup>256</sup> MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 57.

<sup>257</sup> Meadow observes that tools comprised 75% of Augustus' collection. See Meadow, 'Introduction', in *The First Treatise*, p. 21.

<sup>258</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Meadow and Robertson, *The First Treatise*, p. 68.

<sup>259</sup> Pearce and Arnold, 'Samuel á Quiccheberg's 'Classes'', p. 10.

in which the author was working, hence the prominent position accorded to music in the first inscription which is most likely a reflection of Albrecht V's interest in music to which, as Meadow notes, the prince 'devoted considerable resources'.<sup>260</sup>

However, the final two inscriptions in this class contain what would now be understood as ethnographical material such as clothing and weapons from 'foreign nations',<sup>261</sup> and 'the more exotic peoples' <sup>262</sup> in the tenth inscription, and ceremonial clothing belonging to the collector's ancestors, as well as other clothing items 'preserved because of some gratifying memory',<sup>263</sup> in the eleventh. These objects serve a variety of purposes: as a means of studying foreign and past cultures, as historical documentation and as a method of building a model or image of the world. Quiccheberg draws upon an interesting example of sixteenth-century princely female collecting activity in his Digressions to illustrate this latter point, namely noblewomen's collections of miniature figures 'similar to those of dolls',<sup>264</sup> clothed in the garments of the region they were designed to represent (Figure 9). As a result of collecting these miniature representations, which allowed women 'to examine the beauty of foreign clothing from far away nations' as well as the 'customs of the people', within 'every chamber of a certain queen, [...] the processional and customs of the lesser halls [of the palace] are seen "to the nail/claw" [i.e., precisely]'.<sup>265</sup> Meadow's interpretation

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<sup>260</sup> Meadow, 'Introduction', in Meadow and Robertson, *The First Treatise*, p. 19.

<sup>261</sup> MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 57.

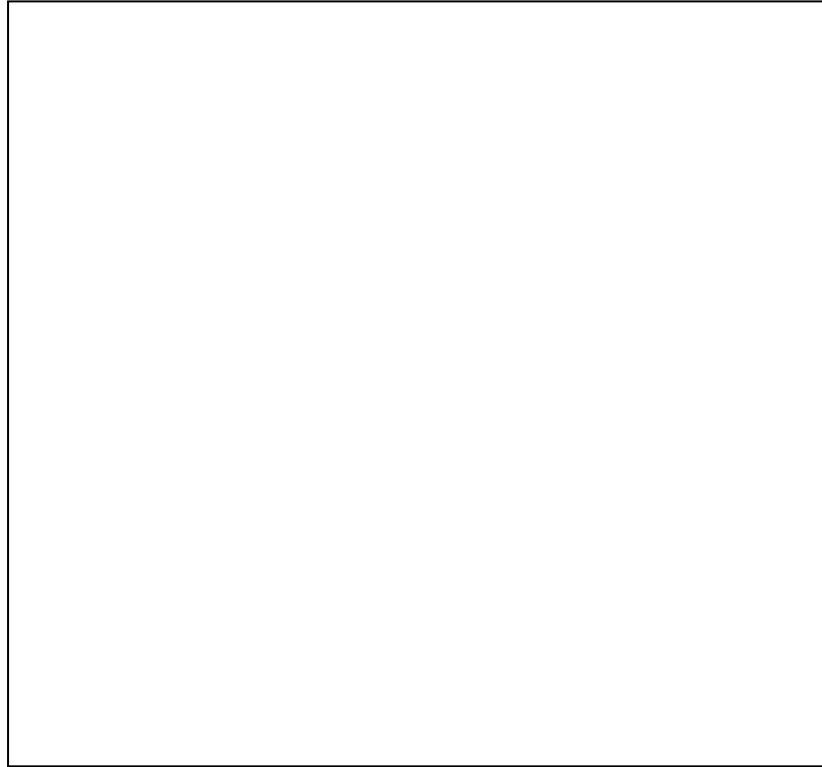
<sup>262</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Meadow and Robertson, in *The First Treatise*, p. 69.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>264</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 38.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*

of this passage is less literal, and translates Quiccheberg's sense as 'to have to hand a *complete picture* of all the chambers, ceremonies, and courtly customs of a palace'.<sup>266</sup>



**Figure 9:**

**Mechanical doll, second half of the sixteenth century. While not strictly a fashion doll, very few of which survive from the 1500s, this richly-attired doll showcases courtly fashions in a manner comparable to the dolls exchanged by princes, male and female, during the Renaissance.<sup>267</sup> The doll is forty-four centimetres in height, and wears a linen dress with silk brocade. Her painted face, curled hair, headdress and jewellery make her an extraordinarily detailed model. A clockwork mechanism allows her to move forwards while playing the cittern and turning her head. Kunstshistorisches Museum, Vienna, KK\_10000.**

*Image removed due to copyright restrictions. Link to image online:*

<http://www.khm.at/en/visit/collections/kunstskammer-wien/selected-masterpieces/> (image 1 of 8).

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<sup>266</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Meadow and Robertson, in *The First Treatise*, p. 85 (my emphasis).

<sup>267</sup> For a discussion of the significance of fashion dolls during the Renaissance see Yassana C. Croizat, "“Living Dolls”: Francois Ier Dresses his Women", in *Renaissance Quarterly*, 60.1 (2007), 94-130 (pp. 107-8).

Schulz contends that the representation of nature established by the third class is effectively ‘contrasted with man and his activities’ in the fourth; that is, ‘researching, cultivating and artistically reproducing nature’.<sup>268</sup> Similarly, Meadow argues that many of the tools and instruments which appear here ‘serve either to study the natural world, [...] to act upon nature, [...] or to manipulate natural materials into artistic or artisanal works’.<sup>269</sup> In fact, this is a more accurate description of the nature and purpose of the third class: instead, Quiccheberg’s fourth class expands these ideas further by emphasising the means by which *princely* worlds are constructed, not only by studying the natural world, but worlds of human manufacture, whether historical, social, cultural, artistic or political. All of the objects in the fourth class may therefore be perceived as tools for the shaping, and hence, the representation, of the world through human endeavour.

Interestingly, Quiccheberg also briefly mentions the role and status of containers in this section, and in his Digressions. This reference appears in the third inscription, in which he proposes collecting writing and drawing implements, preferably ‘apportioned into their own little boxes. So also various kinds of containers of great capacity associated with this’.<sup>270</sup> Implicit within Quiccheberg’s inclusion of these objects is the notion that boxes and containers serve a higher purpose than as mere repositories or storage facilities, a theme which Quiccheberg expands upon in the next class.

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<sup>268</sup> Schulz, ‘Notes’, p. 177.

<sup>269</sup> Meadow, ‘Introduction’, in Meadow and Robertson, *The First Treatise*, p. 21.

<sup>270</sup> Pearce and Arnold, ‘Samuel á Quiccheberg’s ‘Classes’’, p. 9.

*The fifth class: 'The Most famous genealogies from everywhere'*<sup>271</sup>

Quiccheberg's fifth and final class represents a key site of disagreement for interpreters of the text. MacGregor defines it simply as 'paintings and tapestries',<sup>272</sup> and Hajós adds that this comprised 'painting (in oils and water colours) and engraving, corresponding, in part, to an "art collection"; genealogy; portraits; heraldry; textiles; fittings and furnishings'.<sup>273</sup> However, the first, second and fourth classes also contain material of this type, so it is necessary to consider in what sense these objects were distinctive. Bredekamp's description is perhaps more accurate, interpreting the fifth class as 'the *uses* of panel painting',<sup>274</sup> assigning these objects a value apart from, or in addition to, their aesthetic appeal.

The objects featured in the fifth class are overwhelmingly visual in nature, and arguably pertain to the art of representation itself. Images in various media include oil paintings which occupy the first inscription, and watercolour paintings, which are described in the second. Paintings of various kinds also appear in the first class, but are included in the fifth not primarily for what they represent,<sup>275</sup> but because they are exemplars of artistic skill in different arenas of representation, as Quiccheberg states, 'in proportion, gesture, optics,

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<sup>271</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 41.

<sup>272</sup> MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 57.

<sup>273</sup> Hajós, 'The Concept', p. 152.

<sup>274</sup> Bredekamp, *The Lure of Antiquity*, p. 29 (my emphasis).

<sup>275</sup> Quiccheberg does not state what these paintings in oils and watercolours represent, only that they should demonstrate an exceptional level of skill in the areas he mentions. See Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 19.



variety, [and] in the extra-ornaments [...]'.<sup>276</sup> These objects therefore demonstrate the technical ability to master representational strategies in two dimensions.

The fifth class also contains images

of distinguished and famous men: collected in a great number: as those ones at least may be emperors, kings, princes, and other men of excellent virtue, for whom the founder of the theatre was pleased to commemorate.<sup>277</sup>

In part, these images may be conceived as forming part of an historical record – thus embodying a particular kind of knowledge – as do many of the other objects in this class. It is, however, interesting and perhaps significant that portraits of famous men and a genealogical family tree of the collector occupy both the first and the fifth classes, suggesting a conceptual alpha and omega for Quiccheberg's ideal collection, and serving to underline the importance of the collector and his or her symbolic identity, or *representatio*,<sup>278</sup> as enshrined within the cabinet.

Other objects in this class include genealogies, chronologies and classifactory tables in the form of Ramist diagrams. The French philosopher Petrus Ramus (1515-1572) championed the use of tables including a medical chart featuring 'bifurcating branches moving from general concepts to specific details'.<sup>279</sup> This corresponds with Quiccheberg's description of these objects as comprising 'branching panels, and [...] others of only a part of single

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<sup>276</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 19.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>278</sup> For *representatio*, see Kaufmann, 'Remarks on the Collections of Rudolf II'.

<sup>279</sup> See Meadow, 'Introduction', in Meadow and Robertson, *The First Treatise*, p. 8.

subjects and main chapters handsomely placed for the eyes'.<sup>280</sup> More than repositories of information, these objects represented the perceived relationships between concepts and categories in a manner which could be taken in quickly, at a single glance. In this manner, they reflect the larger work of the theatre itself, to make all things comprehensible and legible through the arrangement of objects in space. Meadow articulates these complex objects as 'representations and metacollections', signifying knowledge 'enacted'<sup>281</sup> or performed.

Thus, while Quiccheberg intended his proposed collection to give pleasure to the collector and his or her visitors, it was also an efficient instrument that would contribute to human knowledge of the cosmos. For, he argued,

[T]his has all been proposed in this way, just as Cicero did for the ideal orator, [in order] to impress this universal, absolute enumeration upon the minds of men. By [these means] they can measure the magnitude of their knowledge of all things, so that they may be stimulated mentally to conceive of new matters and to continually investigate them.<sup>282</sup>

Of course, such knowledge generated by Quiccheberg's theatre is, as Susan Stewart observes of collections, contingent and bounded in nature, for

Collections [...] seek to represent experience within a mode of control and confinement [...] Although transcendent and comprehensive in regard to its own

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<sup>280</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 20.

<sup>281</sup> Meadow, 'Quiccheberg', p. 51.

<sup>282</sup> Quiccheberg cited in Meadow, 'Quiccheberg', p. 49.

context, such knowledge is both eclectic and eccentric [...] the ahistoricism of such knowledge makes it particularistic and consequently random.<sup>283</sup>

Moreover, another of Quiccheberg's contemporaries, Francis Bacon, observed that the human mind is subject to certain 'fallacies', or 'idols' of knowledge which obscure rather than reflect reality.<sup>284</sup> For, he argues, 'although our persons live in the view of heaven, yet our spirits are included in the caves of our own complexions and customs; which minister unto us infinite errors and vain opinions, if they be not recalled to examination'.<sup>285</sup>

Quiccheberg's fifth class is also striking for its explicit references to sixteenth-century methods of demonstrating the relationships between objects and ideas, as two final examples will demonstrate. The ninth inscription comprises moral and religious 'sentences and sayings', to be inscribed in various parts of the theatre, on the walls, or on hanging panels, and gilded or painted in different colours.<sup>286</sup> These literal inscriptions are not object labels or wayfinding signage, as some historians such as Kuwakino have suggested,<sup>287</sup> but rather 'textual commonplaces', as Meadow contends,<sup>288</sup> designed to complement the themes and ideas denoted by groups of significant objects in the theatre.

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<sup>283</sup> Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 161.

<sup>284</sup> Francis Bacon, 'The Advancement of Learning, Book Two', in Brian Vickers, ed., *Francis Bacon: The Major Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002 [1605]), pp. 169-299 (pp. 226-7).

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 228.

<sup>286</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 16.

<sup>287</sup> Kuwakino, 'The Great Theatre', p. 311.

<sup>288</sup> Meadow, 'Quiccheberg', p. 53.

Significantly, Quiccheberg also returns to the theme of boxes and containers, as well as the architectural schema of the theatre, in his final inscription, the literal translation of which reads:

Small tables in view to all: for recovering or revealing individual things in themselves: as little cabinets, chests, boxes, cases, small wicker-baskets [...] graduated platforms, bowls [...] And in the walls, hidden trunks. And throughout regular spaces of the theatre tables: likewise arches, little towers, pyramids themselves imitating chests.<sup>289</sup>

This has puzzled historians of the text including Meadow, who states that ‘Here Quiccheberg does something quite odd, raising the container to the same epistemological level as the objects it contains’,<sup>290</sup> and that this is therefore ‘above their function as a conceptually invisible apparatus for protecting and accessing everything in the collection’.<sup>291</sup> In fact, this tendency is not unusual in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century collecting practice, nor is the container or even the conceptual framework typically designed to be ‘invisible’. The container provided the vital framing device in which the object was to be understood, but there was often a deliberate blurring of the boundaries

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<sup>289</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 17.

<sup>290</sup> Meadow, ‘Quiccheberg’, p. 53.

<sup>291</sup> Meadow, ‘Introduction’, in Meadow and Robertson, *The First Treatise*, p. 22.

between container and contained in artistic practices of the sixteenth century,<sup>292</sup> a tendency that will be explored in the next section and chapter.

Certainly Quiccheberg's proposal for his fifth class is more than a collection of objects, or even of objects perceived through the lenses of metonym and semiophore, but of objects which represented the different ways in which knowledge was constructed in the sixteenth century. The fifth class shares this tendency with the other four classes which each explore not only the different properties of objects, but different ways of seeing the world through objects.

### **Quiccheberg's ordering system**

Koji Kuwakino has recently drawn attention to the enormous efforts made by early modern intellectuals to impose order upon the riot of new information which emerged during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, chiefly in the realms of natural philosophy, historical enquiry, geographical discovery and technological innovation.<sup>293</sup> This order was conceived as visual and spatial in nature, for, as Kuwakino notes, 'One of the most popular *topoi* likened the disordered heap of notions to a chaotic *sylva*, while knowledge perfectly

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<sup>292</sup> See Derrida, 'Parergon', pp. 61-3, in which Derrida considers the limitations of Kant's philosophy in apprehending embedded representation in the form of 'a frame framing a painting representing a building surrounded by columns [...] in the form of clothed human bodies' (p. 61).

<sup>293</sup> Kuwakino, 'The Great Theatre', p. 303. For the expansion of the 'scope' of knowledge during the seventeenth century, see Ernest B. Gilman, 'Madagascar on My Mind: The Earl of Arundel and the Arts of Colonization', in Peter Erickson and Clark Hulse, eds., *Early Modern Visual Culture: Representation, Race, and Empire in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), pp. 284-314 (pp. 284-286).

ordered was compared to the geometric garden'.<sup>294</sup> Similarly, Quiccheberg's vision of the ideal collection is conceived as a theatre-like structure in which

out of the contemplation of pictures [...], out of the inspection of materials, out of the preparation of universal instruments, for which [there are] divided tables [...], having [a] *true, complete picture*, they will be of use, to make everything more open and clear.<sup>295</sup>

As well as using objects to create an image of the world, Quiccheberg was also engaging in the early modern practice of commonplacing, as Kuwakino has convincingly argued.<sup>296</sup> In antiquity, commonplaces, or *loci communes*, were themes devised by orators in order to organise the raw material upon which their arguments were based, so that this information could be easily and quickly retrieved.<sup>297</sup> Books of commonplaces were used during the medieval period, but became increasingly popular during the early modern era, in which they were first deployed to organise textual information.<sup>298</sup> Catherine Nicholson defines the art of commonplacing in the sixteenth century as 'the harvesting of proverbs, sententiae, similitudes, and exempla from classical texts for reuse in one's own writing'.<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>294</sup> Kuwakino, 'The Great Theatre', p. 303.

<sup>295</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 46 (my emphasis).

<sup>296</sup> Kuwakino, 'The Great Theatre', pp. 307-311.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 308.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 309.

<sup>299</sup> Catherine Nicholson, *Uncommon Tongues: Eloquence and Eccentricity in the English Renaissance* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), p. 78.

However, as Adrian Johns has argued, commonplacing as a rhetorical technique also ‘shifted into a new area of practice’ during the sixteenth century.<sup>300</sup> Though it retained echoes of its textual origins, it demonstrably influenced other areas of practice including collecting activity, and, as Kuwakino rightly notes, Quiccheberg references a number of books of *loci communes* in his *Inscriptiones* such as the *Officina* (1520) of Johann Ravisius Textor, which may have influenced his thinking. Significantly, Textor’s work comprised a collection of quotations gathered from classical authors, organised into 350 *tituli*, or major themes which were themselves divided into subthemes, rather like the titles and inscriptions of Quiccheberg’s treatise.<sup>301</sup>

Meadow theorises Quiccheberg’s ordering system as flexible, interchangeable and dynamic, arguing that not only might an object legitimately inhabit more than one class, but that the relationships between the five classes were themselves symbiotic, and could be adapted and re-articulated in order to form new meanings and connections.<sup>302</sup> The difficulty lies in determining to what extent this was intentional on Quiccheberg’s part, but certainly there is evidence in the text to suggest that his system was designed to be adaptable, as well as making good commercial and political sense in terms of Quiccheberg’s ambitions of securing future employment. In his ‘Digressions’, Quiccheberg highlights the importance of individual choice in determining what to collect and states that

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<sup>300</sup> Adrian Johns, ‘Reading and Experiment in the Early Royal Society’, in *Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England*, ed. by Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 244-274 (p. 247). See also Katharina Pilaski Kaliardos, *The Munich Kunstkammer: Art, Nature, and the Representation of Knowledge in Courtly Contexts* (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2013), p. 55.

<sup>301</sup> Kuwakino, ‘The Great Theatre’, p. 310. Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 28.

<sup>302</sup> Meadow, ‘Introduction’, in Meadow and Robertson, *The First Treatise*, pp. 23-5.

Nor in fact are divisions put forth, just as if everyone ought to collect all things, but so that each one can inquire after *certain* things, which he may want, or about individual items, which are more important.<sup>303</sup>

This suggests that the follower of Quiccheberg's *Inscriptiones* was indeed free to assume, adapt, or ignore those parts of the system which did not apply to his or her collection.

Moreover, the porosity of categories of collecting practice was still recognised by the mid-seventeenth century. The English philosopher and first keeper of the Ashmolean Museum,<sup>304</sup> Dr Robert Plot (1640-1696), reflected upon this tendency in writing his natural history of Staffordshire, published in 1686. He would, as he puts it,

chiefly apply myself to *things*; and amongst these [...] ancient *Medalls*, *Ways*, *Lows*, *Pavements*, *Urns*, *Monuments of Stone Fortifications*, &c [...] Which being all made and fashioned out of *Natural* things, may as well be brought under a *Natural History* as any thing of *Art*.<sup>305</sup>

Similarly, mathematician and philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646-1716) was struggling with the same dilemma, this time in relation to the cataloguing of libraries, a problem with which Quiccheberg as a librarian would have been familiar:

It is usually found that one and the same truth may be put in different places according to the terms it contains, and also according to the mediate terms or causes

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<sup>303</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 27 (my emphasis).

<sup>304</sup> Established in 1683, the Ashmolean is often considered to be England's 'first' public museum.

<sup>305</sup> Rosemary Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004), p. 9.



upon which it depends, and according to the inferences and results it may have. A simple categoric proposition has only two terms; but a hypothetic proposition may have four, not to speak of complex statements.<sup>306</sup>

Managing a cabinet thus called for invention as well as appropriation and emulation on the part of the collector. Collectors frequently dealt with the new, the unfamiliar and the unusual object, and therefore required an organising schema which allowed for new discoveries and tentative observations, knowledge in progress and uncertainties, as well as established knowledge about the world and its complexities. The freedoms this schema allowed naturally extended to the naming and description of objects and phenomena. As Aldrovandi stated, ‘a Philosopher is allowed to invent names where there are none’,<sup>307</sup> and indeed, more practically, writers of Neo-Latin texts such as Quiccheberg were often compelled to create a new word where there was no precedent in ancient language, or to lend an older word a new meaning.

Quiccheberg’s theatre, like his treatise, is comparable to the construction of an argument using objects in space, influenced by Camillo’s memory theatre and by Ciceronian rhetoric, but also seeking to upstage both in terms of the ‘eloquence’<sup>308</sup> of his categories of the known and collectible universe. In Quiccheberg’s own words,

There is in fact no discipline under the sky, no study, or exercise, which not by its own method could most correctly strive for, than out of this ordering of furnishings.

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<sup>306</sup> Leibniz cited in Thomas Markus, *Buildings and Power: Freedom and Control in the Origin of Modern Building Types* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 174.

<sup>307</sup> Aldrovandi cited in Findlen, *Possessing Nature*, p. 57.

<sup>308</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 26.

Therefore now the opus would be divine and ingenious, which arranges and sets in order all these things in this and every way, so that having pursued this activity concisely and comprehensively [...] they can instruct in innumerable ways.<sup>309</sup>

In fact, while the word ‘category’ is often thought of today as a scientific or taxonomic term of reference, it derives from ancient philosophical discourse, from the Greek *katēgoria*, for ‘statement, accusation’, from *katēgoros*, or ‘accuser’.<sup>310</sup> This suggests that the word once possessed discursive connotations in which the category was not so much a neatly-defined statement of fact as merely a proposition or an argument for a frame of reference. Indeed, in Aristotelean logic, *katēgoria* were deployed as types of predicates such as substance, quantity and quality – things used to determine the nature of being.<sup>311</sup> Within such framing devices, the qualities of physical objects might be explored in detail, and from many different perspectives, but this also allowed for the limitations of typological thought by comparing and contrasting not only different types of object, but different types of predicate: the sharpness of a knife might be contrasted with the sharpness of a sound, for example.<sup>312</sup> As a result, the perceived relationships, and especially the commonalities between objects are ‘asymmetrical’,<sup>313</sup> which perhaps helps explain why

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<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>310</sup> Julia Cresswell, entry for ‘Category’ in *Oxford Dictionary of Word Origins* via *Oxford Reference Online*.

<sup>311</sup> For a brief discussion of Aristotle’s *Categories*, (often named as substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, state, action, and affection), see Luke O’Sullivan, ‘Categories of Historical Thought’, *Philosophia*, 36.4 (2008), 429–452 (p. 430).

<sup>312</sup> See, for example, Simplicius of Cilicia, trans. by Charles Hagen, *Simplicius on Aristotle Physics 7* (London: Duckworth, 1994), p. 65.

<sup>313</sup> Pamela Michelle Hood, *Aristotle on the Category of Relation* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2004), p. 67.

Quiccheberg's categories frequently contain such surprising – to the contemporary reader – juxtapositions of material.

Having delineated, as far as can be determined, the basic structure, concepts and context of Quiccheberg's organisational system, and suggested some theories as to how it might have operated in practice in the sixteenth century, the final section of this chapter will briefly examine an example of material culture which demonstrates these categories in action.

### **Quiccheberg's categories in action**

The seventeenth-century Augsburg Art Cabinet furnishes an interesting point of comparison between Quiccheberg's treatise and early modern collecting practices. This especially large and lavish example of a *kunstschränk*, or miniature curiosity cabinet (Figure 10), was presented as a diplomatic gift to King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden by the magistrates of Augsburg<sup>314</sup> on the king's entry into the city in April 1632.<sup>315</sup> One of the most sumptuous cabinets of this type ever produced, it arrived filled with an extraordinary number and variety of objects from all over the world, from the dried claw of a guenon<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> Then part of the Holy Roman Empire, the free imperial city of Augsburg was a major centre of international trade, and from the mid-sixteenth century was renowned as one of the chief exporters of richly-decorated furniture, of the kind used to house collections and works of art. See Baarsen, *17<sup>th</sup>-Century Cabinets*, p. 3.

<sup>315</sup> This event occurred at the height of the 'Thirty Years' War', the series of wars fought between central European countries between 1618-1648. Following the death of Gustavus Adolphus at the battle of Lützen in November 1632, the cabinet was inherited by Gustavus' widow, Queen Maria Eleonora, and donated to Uppsala University by King Charles XI of Sweden in 1694, where it remains today. See Boström, 'Philipp Hainhofer', p. 543.

<sup>316</sup> A genus of African monkey.

to an ancient Egyptian *ushebti*.<sup>317</sup> The cabinet's contents were arranged within a complex interlocking network of drawers and compartments, so intricate that they required the services of a demonstrator and caretaker to operate them.<sup>318</sup> It also boasted an ambitious conceptual programme, through which it performed such diverse functions as art object, storage facility, pharmacy, music box and microcosm. This section will briefly explore the cabinet's representational strategies, in particular its design, structure, contents and iconography and how these relate to the concepts outlined by Quiccheberg in his *Inscriptiones*.

The cabinet was constructed in Augsburg between 1625 and 1631, probably by the master cabinet maker Ulrich Baumgartner (1580-1652), whose work was overseen by the merchant, courtier and collector Philipp Hainhofer. Hainhofer provided the initial concept and design for the cabinet, but many of its components were the products of a complex network of human actors. Specialist artisans were commissioned to produce its elaborate ebony carvings, gilding and miniature paintings, for example.<sup>319</sup> Hainhofer specialised in producing bespoke micro-cabinets or *kunstschränke* for wealthy clients, although the Augsburg Cabinet was originally conceived without a particular patron in mind.<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> A funerary statue representing a human figure and placed in tombs in order to serve the deceased in the Egyptian afterlife.

<sup>318</sup> See Seelig, 'The Munich *Kunstammer*', p. 106.

<sup>319</sup> Boström, 'Philipp Hainhofer', p. 539. The number of artisans who worked in the cabinet is unknown, but has been estimated at about thirty. See Cederlund and Norrby, 'The Augsburg Art Cabinet', p. 3. Boström notes that 'dozens' of artisans were typically employed on Hainhofer's *kunstschränke*, and Anton Mozart's c. 1617 depiction of the presentation of another of Hainhofer's cabinets to the Duke of Pomerania-Stettin shows approximately twenty-seven contributing artists.

<sup>320</sup> Boström, 'Philipp Hainhofer', p. 540.



Figure 10:

The Augsburg Art Cabinet, completed in 1631 and gifted to Gustavus Adolphus in 1632. The three different sections of the cabinet – pedestal, corpus and crown – can be clearly distinguished here. The top drawers of the corpus open to reveal a (removable) virginal adorned with miniature paintings, the key to which is also visible on the left. The virginal was connected to a hidden clock (the square outline of which is just discernible at the centre of the naturalia mountain), by which means it could be programmed to play three airs mechanically and at particular times of day. The relationship and connectivity of objects and images *in situ* in this cabinet is one of its most interesting aspects.

Photograph by kind permission of the Museum Gustavianum, University of Uppsala, Sweden, © University of Uppsala Art Collections.

Tripartite in structure, and standing at over three metres in height, the Augsburg cabinet comprises a pedestal, on which it can be rotated on its axis, an elaborate ebony-veneered *corpus*,<sup>321</sup> studded with miniature paintings and precious stones, and in which the majority of objects – more than a thousand – were housed.<sup>322</sup> Unusually, the Augsburg cabinet was designed for a specific collection of objects, furnished from Hainhofer's own substantial collection.<sup>323</sup> The cabinet's contents were thus embedded into its very fabric, and the cabinet is both its own container and object; simultaneously *parergon* and *ergon*.

The cabinet is crowned by a magnificent *naturalia* mountain, comprising minerals, crystals, corals and shells, arranged aesthetically and to complement the crowning object, but also to conceal other objects such as the table clock. This in turn is surmounted by a gilded Venus sitting atop a ewer made out of one half of a *coco de mer*, or Seychelles nut, an exotic and extremely sought-after rarity in seventeenth-century Europe (Figure 11). It is this emblem-object which denotes the central theme of the cabinet: love.<sup>324</sup> This love is not portrayed in a single, uncomplicated form, however: the cabinet's objects, iconography and decoration allude to the many kinds or qualities of love, both temporal and spiritual, including courtly love, love of art, love of God and love of wealth. The right hand side of the cabinet, for example, displays Biblical imagery relating to wealth and luxury, as well as temporal

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<sup>321</sup> Ebony was an expensive, tropical wood imported from Venice, and later, from Amsterdam, and became increasingly popular for use as a veneer from 1580. The cabinet's heart was composed of oak and fir. See Baarsen, *17<sup>th</sup>-Century Cabinets*, p. 15, and 78, and Wolfram Koeppel, ed., *Art of the Royal Court: Treasures in Pietre Dure from the Palaces of Europe* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), p. 238.

<sup>322</sup> The cabinet included miniature objects, including a tiny book approximately 5 cm (2 in.) in height with silver mounts and gold text produced in Munich in 1599.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 538.

<sup>324</sup> See Johan Cederlund and Mikael Norrby, trans. by Donald MacQueen, *The Augsburg Art Cabinet* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2003), p. 13, and Boström, 'Philipp Hainhofer', p. 548.

imagery relating to the different kinds of earthly love, including love of gold, and beneath a wooden panel are several gilded reliefs. This part of the cabinet once housed a collection of coins and medals, which were removed in the eighteenth century and transferred to the University of Uppsala's own coin collection. Images of courtly love also decorate seventeen secret drawers at the heart of the cabinet. There is thus an element of *vanitas* here, enshrined in the cabinet's dual awareness of the love of the things of this world, and the desire to collect them, as well as a knowledge of their ephemerality and the futility of attachment to material objects. These predicates of love also resemble Aristotelian logic, and so, reflect Quiccheberg's categories.



**Figure 11:**

**The Ship of Venus, a pouring vessel constructed from a halved Seychelles nut upon whose lid Venus rests, carried aloft by Neptune. Already a costly item in its own right, this natural object has been transformed through the addition of partly gilded silver ornament mimicking lobsters, turtles and shells with coral additions. This object is thought to be the work of Johannes Lencker, and was made in Augsburg in 1630. Museum Gustavianum, UUK 0001. By kind permission of and © Uppsala University Art Collections. Photograph by Mikael Wallerstedt.**

The Augsburg cabinet housed a great variety of objects: from natural specimens and archetypal products of human skill such as the *dodekaeder*, or turned ivory piece (Figure 12). These miniature ivory carvings resembled towers containing ever smaller and more delicate sculptures encased within hoops, spheres and complex geometric shapes. The cabinet also contained medical instruments and supplies, board games, tricks and jokes, (or ‘vexations’), holy relics, antiquities, automata, musical instruments, ethnographic items and mathematical and scientific instruments.



**Figure 12:**

**Ivory *dodekaeder* from the Augsburg Art Cabinet. This object is partly gilded and once included a second sphere on top of the first. This object was made in Germany at the beginning of the sixteenth century, but its artist is unknown. Museum Gustavianum, UUK 0160. By kind permission of and © Uppsala University Art Collections. Photograph by Mikael Wallerstedt.**



The most highly-prized object in the Augsburg cabinet, however, was one which straddled the boundaries between the natural and the artificial. The Seychelles nut, gilded and mounted in silver, formed a new, hybrid object, which simultaneously represented itself, as the nut was thought to counteract poisons, as well as the Ship of Venus, with its symbolic connotations. It also represented the cultivation of nature implicit within Quiccheberg's treatise, and reflected Hainhofer's own views, seen elsewhere in the cabinet, on the value of such objects. Indeed, one of the things which most fascinated Hainhofer, both as a manufacturer of cabinets and as a collector, and which is evident in the design of many of the miniature cabinets he devised, was the interplay between art and nature as expressed through objects in which the work of both was seen, or in which, as Hainhofer put it, 'Art and Nature play with one another'.<sup>325</sup>

For example, Hainhofer had a great fondness for what he called 'ruin marble' or 'landscape stone' with its almost-buildings and ghostly landscapes, which with a little help might become works of art, and for any object upon which Nature appeared to have worked like an artist, or the artist like Nature.<sup>326</sup> Hainhofer's miniature cabinets therefore catered to Mannerist<sup>327</sup> tastes and often contained a large number of pictures, in some cases several hundred, mostly in the form of oil miniatures on semi-precious stones,<sup>328</sup> usually linked by a common theme, such as scenes from the Bible. In one example from the *kunstschränk* of

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<sup>325</sup> Hainhofer cited in Boström, 'Philipp Hainhofer', p. 551.

<sup>326</sup> Boström, 'Philipp Hainhofer', p. 551.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.* Also see Giulio Carlo Argan's definition of Mannerism in *The Baroque Age*, (p. 11), which argues that Mannerist artists were interested in the instability of forms, and were not so much concerned with representing nature, but ideas. Thus, Argan contends, in Mannerist art, 'Form renews itself continually, because it is born from an intuition or discovery of the real [...]'.  
<sup>328</sup> Boström, 'Philipp Hainhofer', p. 547.

Gustavus Adolphus, a miniature painting in oils depicts Moses parting the Red Sea to allow the crossing of the Israelites (Figure 13). Here, the artist, thought to be Johann König, uses the cloudlike patterns of the alabaster to suggest the froth of mighty waves drowning Pharaoh's soldiers as well as the forms of rocks and sky, and directs his entire composition around the natural appearance of the material.<sup>329</sup>



Figure 13:

Johann König's miniature painting *The Israelites crossing the Red Sea*, early seventeenth century, oil on alabaster, as it appears inset into the framework of the Augsburg Art Cabinet, which contains six further inset miniature paintings. The reverse side of this panel depicts the Last Judgement, also by König. Museum Gustavianum, UUK 0066. By kind permission of and © Uppsala University Art Collections. Photograph by Mikael Wallerstedt.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 550-1.

The Augsburg cabinet was one of six cabinets of this type produced by Hainhofer, of which three now survive.<sup>330</sup> Sadly, the inventory for the Augsburg cabinet has been lost, but the sole surviving inventory for an earlier Hainhofer cabinet, the so-called ‘Florentine cabinet’ (1619-25), offers some valuable clues as to why the cabinet contained what it did, and what this was intended to represent. Hainhofer’s inventory of the Florentine cabinet describes it as ‘a small *Kunstkammer*’ and follows established convention by dividing its contents into *Naturalia* (including natural products worked by the human hand) and *Artificialia*, comprising man-made objects and works of art. Within these two categories were represented the animal, plant and mineral kingdoms, the four known continents, every historical period from antiquity to Hainhofer’s own time, and, significantly, tools and instruments for everyday life, work, study and recreation, from a miniature pharmacy to a pair of beard-curling tongs.<sup>331</sup>

The Augsburg cabinet was not only a visual feast, but a condensed representation of the world designed to immerse the beholder through sustained and diligent engagement with its structure and contents. While designed to complement an existing collection as its centrepiece,<sup>332</sup> it also functioned as a collection in its own right, the scope of its collections almost matching those outlined in Quiccheberg’s theatre. It was therefore comparable – if

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<sup>330</sup> Another, the so-called Pomeranian *kunstschränk*, made for Duke Philip II of Pomerania in c. 1615-17, survived until 1945 when it was destroyed during the bombing of Berlin in World War II. A black-and-white photograph and a painting of its presentation to the Duke by Anton Mozart survive. See Boström, ‘Philipp Hainhofer’, p. 541.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 545. The Florentine cabinet was seemingly looted in transit, and the whereabouts of its contents are unknown.

<sup>332</sup> Baarsen, *17th-Century Cabinets*, p. 12.

not reducible – to the later concept of a *Gesamtkunstwerk*<sup>333</sup> which could not be comprehended in a single glance but required careful and prolonged study of its design, iconography, contents and their arrangement and relationship to each other. In short, it demanded an attention of its user that is difficult to reconstruct today.

Philipp Hainhofer personally demonstrated the cabinet to the king on its presentation in 1631, and recorded the following:

After the meal, his Maj[esty], went with the princes to the writing desk [...] I showed [them] the front part for an hour [and] they discussed the contents of one drawer after the other [...] and identified many things through their knowledge.<sup>334</sup>

King Gustavus was entranced by the cabinet, which Hainhofer refers to here as a *Schreibtisch*, or ‘writing desk’.<sup>335</sup> A few days later, Hainhofer wrote that

After lunch his Maj[esty] looked at the third part of the writing desk and the summit with a coco d’India (which I had to lift down) for one hour [...] and [I] was assured [that it] is a *magister omnium artium* [teacher of all the arts].<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>334</sup> Philipp Hainhofer cited in catalogue entry for no. 78, ‘Collector’s Cabinet of Gustavus Adolphus’ in Koeppel, *Art of the Royal Court*, p. 238.

<sup>335</sup> In the late sixteenth century, *Schreibtisch* tended to denote large portable caskets with compartments, fold-down writing surfaces and handles, whereas Hainhofer’s cabinet had no handles and could be moved only with difficulty, owing to its size, shape, weight and delicate structure. ‘Writing desks’ which could be closed up, locked and carried in the manner of chests could be also be used for storing valuable possessions such as documents and jewels. Baarsen suggests that the writing desk first originated as a new type of furniture in early sixteenth-century Spain, but soon developed into a luxury commodity with lavish ornamental schemes and complex symbolism. See Baarsen, *17<sup>th</sup>-Century Cabinets*, pp. 3-8.

<sup>336</sup> Hainhofer cited in Koeppel, ‘Collector’s Cabinet of Gustavus Adolphus’, p. 238.

While the Augsburg cabinet did indeed contain writing materials, Hainhofer's reference to it as a 'writing desk' suggests that it was perceived by its creator to have a practical, as well as a symbolic purpose.<sup>337</sup> While Hainhofer flatteringly observes that the cabinet was a conduit through which the king and his companions demonstrated their own considerable knowledge, he also calls it a 'teacher of all the arts', echoing Quiccheberg's justification for his ideal collection.

Significantly, the Augsburg cabinet required human actors in the form of makers, demonstrators and spectators, together with the sensory acts of sight, touch, hearing and smell. Its complex series of drawers and compartments had to be removed and their contents examined. The handling, contemplation and discussion of the cabinet's various parts and pieces was clearly a time-consuming exercise; as Hainhofer notes, demonstrating just one part of the apparatus occupied a whole hour by itself. Objects of a mechanical nature, including clocks and automata in the form of dolls and miniature armaments, could be made to perform by themselves, or in tandem. Writing of the cabinet some four centuries later, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett echoes Hainhofer's description of its first demonstration to the king when she observes that 'It had literally to be performed to be known'.<sup>338</sup>

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<sup>337</sup> Hainhofer himself described his many of his cabinets, artisanal pieces though they were, as 'household utensils' and storage furniture where 'a potentate should put beautiful jewels, splendid relics or records and writings'. See Hainhofer cited in Boström, 'Philipp Hainhofer', p. 546.

<sup>338</sup> Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'Performing Knowledge', in *Folklore, Heritage Politics, and Ethnic Diversity: Festschrift for Barbro Klein*, ed. by Pertti J. Anttonen, Anna-Leeena Siikala, Stein R. Mathisen and Leif Magnusson (Botkyrka: Mångkulturellt Centrum, 2000 [1999]), pp. 125-139 (p. 5).

Far from being whimsical, the Augsburg cabinet, and its ilk, therefore represents what Heather Maximea describes as the ‘systematic mode of presentation’, which, she argues,

lays out many objects grouped together by means of any number of conceptual categories, many of which are derived from academic systems of thought, such as the Linnaen system of categorisation and naming of the natural world. The intended visitor mode of apprehension is one of *discovery*, as visitors explore the range of specimens or artefacts on view.<sup>339</sup>

Like Quiccheberg’s treatise, the Augsburg Art Cabinet grouped materials into flexible categories of understanding, and exhibited a material culture and its practices as a proposition for understanding the world in its totality. It is evident that the cabinet collated significant objects and images together in such a way as to present the beholder with a spectacle of ingenious design and the interconnectivity of all things. Though Hainhofer began working on the Augsburg Cabinet sixty years after the publication of the *Inscriptiones*, the cabinet’s designer, like Samuel Quiccheberg, was essentially crafting a new form of rhetoric.<sup>340</sup>

*Kunstschränke* were designed to function as collections entire to themselves – a microcosm of the cabinet’s microcosm, but their popularity in the seventeenth century was short-lived. During the religious and political turmoil, as well as the economic crisis of the Thirty Years’ War, Hainhofer sometimes found it difficult to secure buyers for his non-

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<sup>339</sup> Heather Maximea, ‘Exhibition Galleries’, in *The Manual of Museum Exhibitions*, ed. by Barry Lord and Gail Dexter Lord (Oxford: AltaMira Press, 2001), pp. 143-163 (p. 149).

<sup>340</sup> Hainhofer, like Quiccheberg before him, was familiar with many of the seminal collections in Europe, and personally visited the Munich *kunstammer* in 1611. Kaliardos, *The Munich Kunstammer*, p. 13.

commissioned products. The Augsburg cabinet's removable panels, secret compartments, drawers within drawers, objects hidden within other objects and objects which formed part of the very fabric of the cabinet itself collectively formed an object so complex, and so visually and conceptually demanding, that it constituted an already specialist piece which was beginning to fall out of favour with the European nobility.<sup>341</sup>

Moreover, richly-decorated micro-cabinets which came filled with objects and accompanying inventories were a rarity. As Renier Baarsen observes, the fashion for outward show – rather than modestly hiding this behind a plain façade – was increasingly a feature of the seventeenth-century table cabinet.<sup>342</sup> By comparison, Baarsen notes of a later Augsburg cabinet that compared to Hainhofer's creation it 'speaks a completely different language. Virtually all that it has to offer is visible at a glance, a pre-eminently modern characteristic'.<sup>343</sup> As such, the Augsburg Art Cabinet represents both the conceptual zenith and the nadir of the cabinet ideal.

## Conclusions

This chapter has begun the work of reframing the early modern curiosity cabinet, partly within the theoretical parameters of Quiccheberg's 1565 treatise. This chapter has examined some of the key concepts which governed the organisation of materials in the early modern cabinet, and has considered how and to what extent Quiccheberg's text can be harnessed as a tool to interpret early collections. In particular, Quiccheberg's categories

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<sup>341</sup> Baarsen, *17<sup>th</sup>-Century Cabinets*, p. 17.

<sup>342</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>343</sup> Renier Baarsen, 'An Augsburg Cabinet', in *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum*, 48.1 (2000), 135-137 (p. 135).

reveal a preoccupation with notions of identity in the first class, ingenuity and the exotic in the second, hybridity and metamorphosis in the third, construction in the fourth and representation and documentation in the fifth, but also, taken as a whole, with the art of rhetorical framing devices, both physical and conceptual, with which to compose and present his imagined, ideal collection. Overall, however, Quiccheberg's ideas provide a succinct explanation of the polyvocality of objects in the cabinet and their ordering into flexible categories whose boundaries were not fixed, but fluid and shifting.

It is evident from Quiccheberg's text, and from Gabriel Casterni's own poetic commentary cited at the start of this chapter, that it was the collector's ability to 'join together' objects in a seamless harmony that was most admired. The greater the number and diversity of objects collected, the greater amount of practical and rhetorical skill was required on the part of the collector to seek out the connections between materials. Quiccheberg's *Inscriptiones* therefore constitutes an act of assemblage – of materials and concepts – and positions this act and its performance as a foundational concept in understanding how curiosity cabinets were conceived as well as how they were designed to function.

Through the ordering of objects into categories, the collector was imitating the work of a Christian creator in constructing a miniature world which reflected divine architecture. Imitation, invention and emulation were important branches of rhetorical endeavour in the early modern period, reflected not only by Quiccheberg's treatise, but by his appropriation of the classical term 'Inscriptiones' for a textual proposition and by his creative use of Latin. Moreover, by conceptualising his ideal collection as a theatre, Quiccheberg's treatise



also foregrounds the notion of performance, which illuminates how such collections were designed to be experienced and interpreted.

The sixteenth-century cabinet, therefore, might be envisaged as a river with many tributaries, all of which fed, informed and swelled the ranks of the collection which was the proof of the collector's learning, virtuosity and Christian virtue. While Meadow underscores the practical nature and intent of Quiccheberg's text, cautioning scholars of the museum not to rely upon it for evidence of the foundations of museum theory,<sup>344</sup> it nevertheless reveals some of the basic concepts around which collections were structured.

Yet whatever its claims to knowledge, as a theoretical proposition Quiccheberg's text constitutes an invaluable source of information as to how he, and the collectors he hoped to represent, sought to understand the world and their relationship to it through material objects. Moreover, the Augsburg Art Cabinet demonstrates how a comparable approach to objects was taken by designers of cabinets in Germany sixty years later, although this may not have been directly influenced by Quiccheberg or his treatise. At the same time, feats of technical skill such as the Augsburg cabinet illustrate the shifting priorities within representational strategies of the seventeenth century in which the mode of representation arguably began to supersede the object in importance.

Having considered some of the diverse and interconnected categories through which the early modern collector sought to order and comprehend the world, the next chapter focuses upon the use of physical framing devices. Drawing upon examples of art and visual culture

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<sup>344</sup> Meadow, 'Introduction', in Meadow and Robertson, *The First Treatise*, p. 2.

of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, I trace the different practices of framing and containing objects, and demonstrate how these informed the strategies of display and representation found in the cabinet.

## Chapter Three

### The Art of the Cabinet: Framing Devices and Spatial Performances

Just like unto a *Nest of Boxes* round,  
*Degrees* of *sizes* within each *Boxe* are found.  
So in this *World*, may many *Worlds* more be,  
Thinner, and lesse, and lesse still by degree.

Margaret Cavendish, ‘*Of many Worlds in this World*’, 1653<sup>345</sup>

This is *Natures nest of Boxes*; The *Heavens* containe the *Earth*, the *Earth*, *Cities*,  
*Cities*, *Men*. And all these are *Concentrique*; the common *center* to them all, is  
*decay*, *ruine*; only that is *Eccentrique*, which was never made; only that place, or  
garment rather, which we can *imagine*, but not *demonstrate* [...]

John Donne, *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*, 1624<sup>346</sup>

During the funeral orations of Albrecht V in October 1579, his *kunstkammer* in Munich was described as containing the world’s riches in miniature, and thus acting as ‘nature’s

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<sup>345</sup> Margaret [Cavendish], Marchiones [sic] Newcastle, ‘*Of many Worlds in this World*’, in *Poems, and Fancies* (T.R. for J. Martin and J. Allestrye: London, 1653), pp. 44-5 (p. 44).

<sup>346</sup> John Donne, ‘Tenth Meditation’, in *John Donne: Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*, ed. by Anthony Raspa (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987 [1624]), pp. 51-2 (p. 51).

rival' or *aemula*.<sup>347</sup> Similarly, Jodocus Castner's dedicatory poem to Samuel Quiccheberg enthused that the collection 'which he presents as one theatre through all the classes together, Can be a work without equal in the whole world'.<sup>348</sup> Cabinets of curiosity were therefore 'representational spaces' as Henri Lefebvre might define them; that is, space understood as 'directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols'.<sup>349</sup> Here, physical space and its contents were overlain by the symbolic,<sup>350</sup> creating complex networks of association and relation between objects, texts, images and ideas. The production of this symbolic space relied to a significant extent upon the architecture and display apparatus of cabinets of curiosity, which often resembled divine, natural and man-made structures. These in turn embodied particular ways of conceptualising the world, such as the 'nest of boxes'.

The sixteenth-century desire to encapsulate the world in its totality, often within the confines of a single building, is well-illustrated by Quiccheberg's proposal for an ideal collection 'embracing all universal things and individual subjects and extraordinary images',<sup>351</sup> and by later examples of collections such as the Augsburg Art Cabinet in which representations of the natural world, Biblical and secular history and human artistry were compressed into ever tinier forms, from boxes to miniature objects. As such, the early

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<sup>347</sup> Seelig, 'The Munich *Kunstammer*', p. 110. The oration was composed by the Ingolstadt physician Ioannes Boscius. See Kaliardos, *The Munich Kunstammer*, p. 1.

<sup>348</sup> Quiccheberg, trans. by Leonardis, *Inscriptiones*, p. 64.

<sup>349</sup> Henri Lefebvre, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith, *The Production of Space* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1991), p. 39.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>351</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 1.

modern practices of assemblage, framing and containment, and the different ways in which these were performed, are integral to understanding how the world was conceived in cabinets of curiosity, and offer valuable insights into their representational strategies. These practices extended beyond the cabinet, however, and may also be identified within sixteenth- and seventeenth-century art and visual culture.

In order to understand the practices of assemblage, framing and containment in the cabinet, this chapter investigates the early modern understanding of art, and the uses and significance of framing devices and their spatial performance in art and visual culture contemporaneous with the cabinet. This chapter also explores how collections were visually represented in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century portraiture and genre paintings, and how these objects have the potential to illuminate how collections of art were arranged and displayed, and how the relationships between objects were constructed and managed.

### **Early modern conceptions of art**

Today, our (Western) conception of art is a broad one. Consequently, what art historians and curators might conceive as even purely visual ‘art’ during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries covers a wide range of material culture, from paintings, sculpture and architecture to furniture, tapestries, books, models, automata, jewellery, tableware, clocks and scientific instruments. Yet historians of art have long recognised the tensions and disparities between early modern conceptions of art and those of the present. Ernst Gombrich famously

asserted that ‘There really is no such thing as Art. There are only artists’,<sup>352</sup> Pamela Smith has observed that the terms ‘fine art’ and ‘artist’ are modern ones,<sup>353</sup> while Martin Kemp has contended that the notion of fine art did not exist during the Renaissance, for ‘There was no concept of such an overarching category of objects uniquely created for aesthetic consumption’.<sup>354</sup> Early modern perceptions of art form too large and complex a subject to be examined in detail here, yet it is worth noting some key observations as to how these ideas were constructed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and how this affects contemporary interpretations of early modern visual culture.

The etymological root of ‘art’, from the Latin *ars*, is associated with cunning and skill, as well as deception and rhetoric,<sup>355</sup> and early modern conceptions of art certainly drew heavily upon the relationship between art and artifice, as this chapter will demonstrate. Art, illusion and belief were inextricably linked during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as the popularity of the myth of Zeuxis and Parrhasius attests. This well-known fable, as related by Pliny the Elder in his *History of Nature*, tells the tale of two rival Greek painters, who held a competition to determine who was the greater artist. Zeuxis painted a bunch of grapes so true to life that birds descended from the air to pluck at them, but was himself

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<sup>352</sup> Ernst Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, 13<sup>th</sup> edn (Oxford and New York: Phaidon, 1978), p. 4.

<sup>353</sup> Smith, *The Body of the Artisan*, p. 27.

<sup>354</sup> Kemp, *Behind the Picture*, p. 11. See also Rebecca Zorach, ‘Renaissance Theory: A Selective Introduction’, in James Elkins and Robert Williams, eds., *Renaissance Theory* (New York and Oxon: Routledge, 2008), pp. 3-36 (pp. 16-18). As Zorach observes, the idea of the Renaissance has been frequently harnessed by art historians attempting to locate the mythic origins of art, as well as deploying it as ‘a favorite foil for Modernism’, with the implication that Renaissance and Modern art do not share important characteristics (pp. 9-10 and pp. 16-17).

<sup>355</sup> Laurent Pernot, trans. by W. E. Higgins, *Rhetoric in Antiquity* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), p. x, and pp. 103-4.

fooled by Parrhasius' rendering of a curtain, which Zeuxis attempted to draw back in order to reveal the 'painting'.<sup>356</sup> Thus, as Paul Barolsky observes, part of the 'work' of art was to encourage the beholder "to believe that which was not".<sup>357</sup> Art was understood in part then, as *aemula naturae*, the successful imitation of nature, *aemula* denoting a competitive rival.<sup>358</sup>

Yet, as Rebecca Zorach argues, *ars* cannot be understood as corresponding to contemporary notions of art, for,

Looking at Latin works published in the Renaissance whose titles include the word *ars*, one finds moral philosophy, devotional exercises, mathematics, astronomy, mysticism, love, medicine, politics, war, logic, dialectic, alchemy, botany, cryptography, optics [...], preaching, oratory and poetics.<sup>359</sup>

Thus, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, *ars* more accurately described works of skill and imagination characterised by an 'understanding of materials and their manipulation',<sup>360</sup> and hence, was applied to a related set of practices, some 'high', and some 'low'.

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<sup>356</sup> See Norman Bryson, *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze* (Houndmills and London: Macmillan, 1983), p. 1.

<sup>357</sup> Franco Sacchetti cited in Paul Barolsky, 'In Praise of Folly', in David R. Smith, ed., *Parody and Festivity in Early Modern Art: Essays on Comedy as Social Vision* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 11-16 (p. 16).

<sup>358</sup> Charles B. Schmitt, *John Case and Aristotelianism in Renaissance England* (Québec: McGill Queen's University Press, 1983), p. 193. Schmitt suggests that this Latin phrase was culled from Apuleius.

<sup>359</sup> Zorach, 'Renaissance Theory', p. 17.

<sup>360</sup> Smith, *The Body of the Artisan*, p. 107.

However, these practices were not necessarily analogous to those of the ‘fine arts’ formulated in later centuries. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century conceptions of art demonstrably referred to many different types of cultural practice, each governed by subtle nuances of production, reception and consumption, performed within highly specific contexts and for and by specific social actors. Stephen Orgel has noted how painting was primarily looked upon as a craft in seventeenth-century England, but as belonging to the liberal arts in Florence.<sup>361</sup> As Gombrich observes, ‘Art with a capital A has no existence’, except as a ‘bogey’ and a ‘fetish’ in art historiography; yet it remains a useful term of reference provided its limitations are recognised.<sup>362</sup>

The polyvalency of early modern art, and the connections between the different types of cultural practice falling under this moniker, may also be observed in the dedicatory poem to John Tradescant the Elder which appears in the younger Tradescant’s 1656 catalogue of his collection, *Musaeum Tradescantium*, which proclaims that

Nor court, nor shop-crafts were thine ARTES,  
Which Adam studied ere he did transgresse:  
The Wonders of the Creatures, and to dresse  
The worlds great Garden.<sup>363</sup>

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<sup>361</sup> Stephen Orgel, ‘Idols of the Gallery: Becoming a Connoisseur in Renaissance England’, in Peter Erickson and Clark Hulse, eds., *Early Modern Visual Culture: Representation, Race, and Empire in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), pp. 251–283 (p. 271).

<sup>362</sup> Gombrich, *Story of Art*, p. 4.

<sup>363</sup> Tradescant, *Musaeum Tradescantium*, fol. 6<sup>v</sup>.



Here, Tradescant is praised for his ‘art’ in establishing a collection of natural specimens which is compared to God’s creation and to the Garden of Eden. In this sense, ‘art’ might, arguably, be applied to Quiccheberg’s treatise as well as to what is now regarded as a canonical work of art such as Leonardo da Vinci’s *The Virgin of the Rocks* (c. 1483-6). Moreover, the cabinet, as the ‘chamber of artifices’, was well-suited to the performance and consumption of the arts in all their forms.

As Derrida contends, there is a tendency to presuppose a singular meaning or signification of the word ‘art’, for

One makes of art in general an object which claims to distinguish an inner meaning, the invariant, and a multiplicity of external variations *through* which, as through so many veils, one would try to see or restore the true, full, originary meaning: one, naked.<sup>364</sup>

In his *Lives of the Most Excellent Italian Painters, Sculptors and Architects, from Cimabue to Our Times*, published in 1550, and revised and expanded in 1568,<sup>365</sup> the Italian painter and architect Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) conceived of a tripartite and hierarchical division of the major arts into painting, sculpture and architecture. Yet as Kemp observes, and as Quiccheberg’s treatise demonstrates, the existence of such categories of ‘art’ did not preclude a painting such as da Vinci’s *Virgin* from inhabiting multiple categories of use and

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<sup>364</sup> Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, p. 22.

<sup>365</sup> Vasari also served as an ‘artistic advisor’ to Cosimo I de’ Medici (1519-1574), Grand Duke of Tuscany, and collaborated on the the design and construction of Cosimo’s *scrittoio* in the Palazzo Vecchio (contents now in the Uffizi), Florence. See Turpin, ‘Cosimo I de’ Medici’, pp. 67 and 73, and Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, trans. by Julia and Peter Bondanella (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991, [1568]), p. viii.

interest during the sixteenth century; as an altarpiece, as a commission for the Confraternities of the Immaculate Conception and as a saleable commodity produced by a sought-after master.<sup>366</sup> Thus, early modern categories of art were also related to use and function, and this shaped their perception.

This changing conceptualisation of early modern art in art historiography affects how the historical cabinet may be interpreted. Out of context, it is understandable that a single object produced for a cabinet collection, or one of the elaborately carved and painted cupboards designed to house such objects should be interpreted by today's museums as 'art' or decorative furniture – and indeed, this would not be entirely at odds with how they were perceived in the early modern era, as Chapter Two has demonstrated. Yet it would describe only a limited, cloudy view of these complex objects, their performance and purpose in their own era.

### **Art and collecting activity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries**

The concepts, practices and contexts of art and the curiosity cabinet were deeply entwined during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The collection and display of works of art played a significant role in the formation of cabinets and other collections, and cabinets shaped how works of art were arranged, displayed and consumed. Moreover, cabinets and collections – both real and imagined – frequently appeared in paintings, just as paintings were often commissioned for specific cabinets, and as Quiccheberg observed, smaller

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<sup>366</sup> Kemp, 'Behind the Picture', p. 11.

pieces of furniture, such as miniature cabinets, were themselves regarded simultaneously as works of art, receptacles and collectable objects.<sup>367</sup>

This section surveys collecting practices which co-existed with the cabinet, drawing upon Paul Ardier's seventeenth-century *Galerie des Illustres* as an illustrative example. As Quiccheberg's treatise demonstrates, the cabinet did not exist in isolation, but rather as a certain iteration or performance of broader collecting practice, situated within a diverse and interconnected world, which served a particular set of communities. There were, therefore, various established traditions of art collecting, as Ronald Lightbown argues, which preceded the cabinet, from royal collecting to reliquaries,<sup>368</sup> which did not necessarily cease with the advent of the cabinet, but were absorbed by it, and underwent subtle changes in scale and performance.<sup>369</sup>

These earlier collections drew to a certain extent upon late medieval traditions of collecting activity, and are not considered to be 'cabinets', ostensibly due to their scope, purpose and contents. Thus accumulations of objects without accompanying programmes and systems of display, such as those found within late medieval *schatzkammern*, are held to be connected to, but distinct from the early cabinet.<sup>370</sup> However, early and formative collections of art often display similar tendencies to the cabinet, and many of the key visual

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<sup>367</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 17.

<sup>368</sup> Lightbown, 'Charles I', p. 53.

<sup>369</sup> The practice of collecting is an ancient human activity and may also be said to comprise 'the early hoards and grave goods, the accumulations of Greek temples and open-air shrines, the royal collections of Hellenistic kings, [and] the art and curiosity collections held by the Romans'. See Alexandra Bounia, 'Introduction', in *The Nature of Classical Collecting: Collectors and Collections, 100 BCE-100 CE* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p. 1.

<sup>370</sup> MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 9.

‘tropes’ of the cabinet may also be found in earlier practices and contexts – for example, the ubiquitous ‘crocodile on the ceiling’ could also, on occasion, be found (and can still be found) suspended from the nave of certain late medieval churches.<sup>371</sup>

Thus the cabinet may be fruitfully compared with other, coeval types of collection which illustrate similar concerns with assembly, framing and containment, such as the portrait gallery. Portrait galleries constituted a popular form of display during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and might serve a number of different purposes.<sup>372</sup> The French lawyer Paul Ardier (1543-1638), for example, assembled a collection of 363 portraits<sup>373</sup> of French monarchs and their contemporaries at the Château de Beauregard in France’s Loire Valley. Both Ardier’s gallery and its portraits survive (Figure 14), and furnish a remarkable example of how a seventeenth-century politician perceived his world. The portraits are displayed on four walls of a rectangular gallery approximately twenty-six metres in length, which may be traversed in chronological order from right to left, beginning with Philippe

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<sup>371</sup> See Pierre Alain Mariaux, who observes that ‘in some churches we may find, side by side, embalmed crocodiles, flints, meteorites, antelope and unicorn horns, griffon claws, huge teeth and bones, etc. Most of these *mirabilia* seem to have been placed in a conspicuous position, as they would be later in encyclopedic museums [...]’. Pierre Alain Mariaux, ‘Collecting (and Display)’, in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. by Conrad Rudolph (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 213-232 (p. 219).

<sup>372</sup> See Edward P. Alexander and Mary Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Plymouth: AltaMira, 2008), p. 114.

<sup>373</sup> Ardier purchased this fifteenth-century building in 1617, before retiring there in 1631 until his death in 1638. Hutton estimates that Ardier spent the final two decades of his life installing, furnishing, and decorating the gallery. See Patrick H. Hutton, *Philippe Ariès and the Politics of French Cultural History* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004), p. 165.

VI, the first Valois King of France, crowned in 1328, and ending with Louis XIII (whom Ardier served as treasurer) who died in 1643.<sup>374</sup>



**Figure 14:**

**Paul Ardier's *Galerie des Illustres* as it appears today, *in situ* at the Château de Beauregard, France. In the top left of the image, a portrait of Cardinal Richelieu, chief minister to Louis XIII, may be seen (upper row, second portrait from left). Landscape and still life paintings adorn the lower sections of the walls, and Delft tiles cover the floor.**

*Image removed due to copyright restrictions. Link to image online: <http://www.visite-au-chateau.com/beauregard.htm> (image 2 of 7).*

Few of Ardier's portraits were painted from life, and most are uniform in size and composition, except for those figures singled out for special attention, such as the portraits of two monarchs contemporary with Ardier, Henry IV and Louis XIII, who are

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<sup>374</sup> Friedrich Polleross, 'La Galerie des Portraits Entre Architecture et Littérature Essai de Typologie', in Claire Constans and Mathieu Da Vinha, *Les Grandes Galeries Européennes, 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Centre de Recherche du Château de Versailles, 2010), pp. 67- 90 (p. 77).

distinguished by their larger and equestrian paintings. The majority of Ardier's portraits are arranged in three rows set into a wooden framework which forms an almost continuous horizontal band about the upper section of the gallery walls. Only the edges of the framework separate individual images, lending it the appearance of a grid. Despite the density of this display, however, Ardier's use of frames reflects the arrangement of objects in cabinets of curiosity, for, as Neil Kenny has argued, these spaces

always had distinct borders defining the limits of an object [...] and those borders never touched those of the next object, from which they were always separated by an intervening space. Items were not piled up on top of each other or squeezed up against each other.<sup>375</sup>

Kenny's view is an interesting one, but it would be dangerous to assume that all collections adhered to this strategy.

Ardier's display of portraits is accompanied by a wealth of Baroque detail, from Delft tiles on the floor depicting images of French soldiers,<sup>376</sup> their arms, insignia and instruments, to the elaborately painted ceiling beams. The seventeenth-century beholder moving through this space would therefore have been presented with a 'complete' history of the French monarchy from its perceived dawn to its contemporary incarnation.

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<sup>375</sup> Neil Kenny cited in Alexander Marr, 'Gentile Curiosité: Wonder-working and the Culture of Automata in the Late Renaissance', in Robert Evans and Alexander Marr, eds., *Curiosity and Wonder from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006b [1998]), p. 169.

<sup>376</sup> The Delft tiles were laid in 1627, and were based on engravings by Jaocb de Gheyn. Bazin, *The Museum Age*, p. 103.

Ardier's portraits of French rulers are also bordered by images of their wives, statesmen and contemporaries, and accompanied by supplementary details such as their dates of reign, mottoes and devices, some of which are inscribed on a decorative border beneath.<sup>377</sup> Thus, Ardier's gallery not only constructs a history of the monarchy, or even of France, but utilises the space as a means of creating a map of the shifting political topography of Europe and further afield<sup>378</sup> over a period of more than three centuries.

Ardier's gallery thus resembles Quiccheberg's recommendations for the first and fifth classes of his theatre, which define the collector's identity and relationship to the world of which he was a part. As such, Ardier deployed the arrangement of significant images within a linear space in order to convert historical time into what Philippe Ariès has interpreted as a 'pedagogical theater'<sup>379</sup> representing a perceived totality, using frames, borders and inscriptions to document and demarcate the relationships between persons and events, the historical and the contemporary, and most importantly, between the kingdom of France and the rest of the world.

## **Representations of collections in seventeenth-century genre paintings**

Representations of collections in early modern paintings also have the potential to furnish important insights into how the cabinet's conceptual categories operated in practice. In particular, they reveal the perceived relationships between objects when presented in

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<sup>377</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>378</sup> Statesmen from the Ottoman Empire are also represented in Ardier's portrait gallery, including the Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (r. 1520-1566).

<sup>379</sup> Philippe Ariès cited and trans. by Patrick Hutton, *Philippe Ariès*, p. 167.

particular arrangements. Alexander Marr has drawn attention to pictures of collections as a fashionable genre of (mostly Flemish) painting among wealthy middle-class citizens, especially of Antwerp,<sup>380</sup> during the first half of the seventeenth century, and distinguishes them from engravings of cabinets of the same period.<sup>381</sup> Some of these paintings refer to known collections, while others are, to varying degrees, imaginary, allegorical representations. Willem II van Haecht's (1593-1637) *The Cabinet of Cornelis van Der Geest* (1628) presents a striking example of a painting which combines both real and imaginary elements in an interesting way (Figure 15).<sup>382</sup> This image depicts Van Haecht's patron, the Antwerp spice merchant and art collector Cornelis van der Geest (c. 1575-1638), presenting his collection of paintings to the rulers of the Spanish Netherlands, Archduke Albrecht and Archduchess Isabella, while animated groups of male courtiers and distinguished guests, including the Flemish artists Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony Van

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<sup>380</sup> Antwerp was a major centre of art and collecting activity during the seventeenth century. See James A. Welu, *The Collector's Cabinet: Flemish Paintings from New England Private Collections* (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1983), p. 8.

<sup>381</sup> Marr, 'Introduction', in Evans and Marr, *Curiosity and Wonder*, pp. 10-11. Irene Baldriga interprets the paintings of collections genre as a form of propaganda, designed to aid patrons and collectors in promoting themselves and their collections to the highest echelons of society. See Baldriga, 'The Role of Correspondence in the Transmission of Collecting Patterns in Seventeenth-Century Europe: Models, Media and Main Characters', in Francisco Bethencourt and Florike Egmond, eds., *Correspondence and Cultural Exchange in Europe, 1400-1700*, 4 vols (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), III, pp. 187-218 (pp. 212-13).

<sup>382</sup> Charles Peterson, 'The Five Senses in Willem II van Haecht's Cabinet of Cornelis van Der Geest', in *Intellectual History Review*, 20.1 (2010), 103-121 (pp. 103-5). Van Haecht also served as the custodian of van der Geest's art collection, *ibid.*, p. 121. Other important examples of this genre include Peter Paul Rubens' and Jan Breughel The Elder's *The Sense of Sight* (1617-18), one of a series of five allegorical paintings devoted to the five senses commissioned by the Archduke and Archduchess, and Flemish artist David Teniers The Younger's *Archduke Leopold Wilhelm in His Gallery in Brussels* (c. 1651). See Marr, 'The Culture of Automata', p. 169, and Welu, *The Collector's Cabinet*, p. 10.



Dyck,<sup>383</sup> examine and handle other objects in the collection. Van der Geest appears as a standing figure in the lower left corner of the painting; he faces his seated patrons while pointing to one of his most prized possessions, a painting of the *Madonna and Child* (c. 1500) by another Flemish artist, Quentin Metsys.



**Figure 15:**

**Willem van Haecht's *The Cabinet of Cornelis van Der Geest* (1628). This crowded display was intended to represent the highlights of van der Geest's collection, which privileged Flemish artists. The man about to enter the room on the right has been identified as van Haecht, the overseer of the collection.**  
**By kind permission of The Rubens House, Antwerp, © Collection of Antwerp, RH.S.171.**

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<sup>383</sup> Rubens appears to the right of the Archduke, and Van Dyck to the left of van der Geest. Willem van Haecht is the figure about to enter the room on the right. Welu, *The Collector's Cabinet*, p. 9.

The space in which Van der Geest's collection is shown is portrayed as a tall, ground-floor gallery with shuttered windows overlooking a landscape on the left, while an entrance on the right allows a glimpse of the city of Antwerp. Van der Geest's collection thus stands as an intermediary between the natural and the artificial worlds it represents. However, the collection is dominated by its paintings, the majority of which are hung in three tiers in the picturesque or decorative fashion,<sup>384</sup> although, unlike Ardier's gallery, others have been taken down for closer inspection and are overlapped by each other and by classical sculptures, books, globes and mathematical instruments.

The physical placement of objects in the curiosity cabinet, as well as their juxtaposition with other items, was key to investing an object with meaning beyond its physicality. Objects were no longer just objects when housed in the cabinet; they were symbols and metonyms. Indeed, Krzysztof Pomian has gone so far as to describe objects in cabinets as 'semiophores', that is, no longer serving any practical purpose, but rather functioning as intermediaries between the visible world without and the invisible world beyond.<sup>385</sup>

While van Haecht's painting refers to a well-known collection, and many of the works it represents in miniature may be individually identified, the artist's portrayal is an idealised one.<sup>386</sup> The image presents only the most important works in van der Geest's collection,

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<sup>384</sup> John Loughman, 'Display', in Sheila D. Muller, ed., *Dutch Art: An Encyclopaedia* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 105-108 (p. 107).

<sup>385</sup> Krzysztof Pomian, trans. by Wiles-Portier, Elizabeth, *Collectors and Curiosities: Paris and Venice, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990 [1987]), p. 30.

<sup>386</sup> See Christopher White, *Peter Paul Rubens: Man and Artist* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 86, and Susan Merriam, *Seventeenth-century Flemish Garland Paintings: Still Life, Vision, and the Devotional Image* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), p. 85.

which, Peterson argues, serve to provide a visual and conceptual introduction to the nature and scope of the collection as a whole.<sup>387</sup> It is therefore uncertain whether the work can be read as an accurate record of how van der Geest's collection was physically arranged and displayed, although during the later seventeenth century, as John Loughman observes, there was

a tendency [...] especially among the wealthier owners with high-quality paintings, to bring together their best works in one place [...] these rooms were lavishly furnished and generally appeared on the ground floor.<sup>388</sup>

The work also depicts the most important and distinguished visitors to van der Geest's collection. However, the meeting between van der Geest and his sovereigns took place in 1615, before many of the works depicted were made.<sup>389</sup>

This complex painting may be interpreted in a number of ways: as a catalogue of works,<sup>390</sup> and therefore, as a microcosmic rendering of van der Geest's collection,<sup>391</sup> as an advertisement for the talent of Flemish artists,<sup>392</sup> and as an idealised portrait of a collector and patron of the arts.<sup>393</sup> However, it may also be interpreted historically as a portrait of a culture, and of seventeenth-century practices of collecting and display. For example, Charles Peterson argues that Van Haecht's painting may be understood as a somewhat

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<sup>387</sup> Peterson, 'The Five Senses', p. 116.

<sup>388</sup> John Loughman, 'Display', p. 106.

<sup>389</sup> Deborah Schultz, *Marcel Broodthaers: Strategy and Dialogue* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), p. 156.

<sup>390</sup> Baldriga, 'The Role of Correspondence', p. 214.

<sup>391</sup> Schultz, *Marcel Broodthaers*, p. 156.

<sup>392</sup> Peterson, 'The Five Senses', pp. 109-121.

<sup>393</sup> Merriam, *Flemish Garland Paintings*, p. 85, and Baldriga, 'The Role of Correspondence', p. 213.

unconventional <sup>394</sup> representation of the Five Senses, a popular iconographical programme during this period.<sup>395</sup> Peterson notes that within the confines of a single room heaped with paintings, sculptures and objects, five paintings are singled out for particular scrutiny, and are displayed in the foreground of the composition. The subject of each painting, Peterson argues, relates to a particular sense. From left to right, the first of these, Metsys' *Madonna*, depicts the infant Christ embracing and bestowing a kiss upon the Virgin, and thus represents the sense of touch. The second painting, identified as Frans Snyder's *Monkeys Stealing Fruit* (c. 1620) represents taste, the third, van Haecht's *Danaë* (c. 1620s), sight, the fourth, Jan Wildens' *Winter Landscape with Hunter* (1624), smell and the fifth, Hans Rottenhammer's *Last Judgement* (c. 1590s), hearing.

Each painting is depicted in spatial proximity to objects, persons and activities which underscore the performance of each sense or pertain to a related theme.<sup>396</sup> The figure of Van der Geest, for example, reflects the evocation of touch through his own gesture, reaching out as if to touch the canvas of Metsys' image, while his left hand is held over his heart.<sup>397</sup> Together, the five senses refer to the sensory exploration of the world, which may be performed through the conduit of van der Geest's collection. Yet these five paintings, created at different times and by five different artists, were not originally conceived as companion pieces, and therefore their arrangement on the canvas constitutes an exercise in rhetoric on the parts of the collector and artist. Peterson notes that

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<sup>394</sup> Peterson, 'The Five Senses', p. 115.

<sup>395</sup> The theme of the Five Senses was also popular in antiquity and the medieval era. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>396</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>397</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

it is tempting to interpret paintings such as van Haecht's as comprehensive lists, in which characters, media and subjects are arranged into fixed categories of meaning. However, a more profitable approach is to consider the grouping and arrangement of individuals and objects in such works as a flexible ordering system, in which data and representative artefacts slip freely from one cluster of associative meanings to another.<sup>398</sup>

Peterson's observation suggests that the beholder of Van Haecht's painting was complicit in this rhetorical practice, and was actively invited to seek out the myriad connections between the objects and images it represents, here transformed into complex networks of meaning. As Ernst Gombrich has observed of the visual language of Renaissance art, symbols in the early modern era were not mere pictographs, with a single or simplistic relationship to the thing signified.<sup>399</sup> Rather, they were made up of many parts, or attributes, each of which had its own separate associations and which were often used in other contexts. While there existed compendia of symbols upon which artists might draw, such as Ceasare Ripa's monumental *Iconologia* of 1593, which listed more than seven hundred allegorical personifications, Berry argues that these did not function as dictionaries.<sup>400</sup> Instead, they helped form 'a horizon of possibilities for visual literacy' among budding artists and apprentices, who would then adapt them as they saw fit.<sup>401</sup>

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<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>399</sup> Gombrich, *Symbolic Images*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>400</sup> J. Berry, 'Imagination into Image: On Visual Literacy', in *Children of Mercury: The Education of Artists in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Rhode Island: Department of Art, Brown University, 1984), p. 74.

<sup>401</sup> Berry, 'Imagination into Image', p. 70.

The resulting ambiguity of symbolism and allegory in art was also recognised by medieval authors. According to the influential theologian and philosopher St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), for example,

one thing may have similitude to many; for which reason it is impossible to proceed from any thing mentioned in the Scriptures to an unambiguous meaning. For instance the lion may mean the Lord because of one similitude and the Devil because of another.<sup>402</sup>

Thus, Van Haecht's 'painting of paintings', with its multiple possible readings, offers a sense of how the cabinet functioned as a tool for visual perception, by inviting the beholder to engage in the act of commonplacing and so identify the relationships between the objects, persons and images depicted. It also relies upon a synthesis of visual representation and rhetorical invention 'in order to stress the intellectual value of his [van der Geest's] collection as an infinitely adaptable, microcosmic proxy for the universe'.<sup>403</sup> Crucially, Van Haecht's *Cabinet* also demonstrates how Quiccheberg's version of commonplacing in his *Inscriptiones* finds a point of confluence in the manner in which visual taxonomies in the early modern period operated.

## Portraits of collectors

Portraits of collectors also form an important source of information for how space was both perceived and made to perform in the cabinet. Collections featured in many portraits of the

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<sup>402</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, cited in Gombrich, *Symbolic Images*, p. 14.

<sup>403</sup> Peterson, 'The Five Senses', p. 121.

sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as evidence of the status, wealth, or taste of the sitter, but were also deployed as framing devices in their own right. The Delft-born portrait painter Daniel Mytens' (1590-1647) c. 1618 pendant portraits of Thomas Howard (1585-1646), Earl of Arundel, Surrey and Norfolk, and Alatheia (née Talbot) (c. 1590-1654), Countess of Arundel and Surrey, provide an interesting example of this tendency (Figures 16 and 17). However, these paintings also demonstrate how different techniques of composition, framing and invention shaped their reception, consumption and interpretation by early modern viewers. This section will consider the artist's use of space and perspective and how the depiction of the collection in each pendant is used to both frame the sitter and provide an ideological topography in which to situate their collecting practices.

Thomas Howard is depicted on the right of Alatheia, in accordance with most Dutch portraits of husbands and wives in the seventeenth century.<sup>404</sup> According to Joanna Woods-Marsden, the situation of women on the left, or 'sinister' side, is a symbolic reflection of their lower status,<sup>405</sup> although other scholars have argued that Dutch portraiture is unusually egalitarian in its treatment of women, allowing them a far greater degree of autonomy.<sup>406</sup>

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<sup>404</sup> Harry Berger, Jr, 'Artificial Couples: The Apprehensive Household in Dutch Pendants and *Othello*', in Lena Cowen Orlin, ed., *Center or Margin: Revisions of the English Renaissance in Honour of Leeds Barroll* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press, 2006) pp. 114-157 (p. 127).

<sup>405</sup> Joanna Woods-Marsden, 'The Meaning of the European Painted Portrait 1400-1650', in Babette Bohn and James M Saslow, eds., *A Companion to Renaissance and Baroque Art* (Somerset, NJ: Wiley, 2013), pp. 442-462 (p. 451).

<sup>406</sup> Harry Berger, Jr, *Manhood, Marriage, and Mischief: Rembrandt's 'Night Watch' and Other Dutch Group Portraits* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), p. 141.



**Figure 16:**

**Daniel Mytens, *Thomas Howard, 14<sup>th</sup> Earl of Arundel, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Surrey and 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Norfolk* (c. 1618).  
By kind permission of and © National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG 5292.**



One of the most seminal English collectors and patrons of the arts of the seventeenth century, Howard is depicted seated, at the entrance to a barrel-vaulted gallery containing classical sculptures on plinths to which he gestures with a baton.<sup>407</sup> The gallery's grey and pink flagstones are illuminated by shafts of light from windows spaced at regular intervals on the left hand side of the gallery, and the space opens out onto a balcony overlooking the river Thames at the far end. This visual connection between the interior and the exterior is significant as according to Howarth, Howard was one of the first English collectors to view his garden as a complementary space for the display of sculptures, inspired by his travels in Italy.<sup>408</sup>

The portrait of Alatheia, a wealthy heiress whose fortune not only allowed for the collecting activities and arts patronage of her husband,<sup>409</sup> but to match them,<sup>410</sup> mirrors the composition of the first painting and shows the Countess seated against the backdrop of red velvet curtain which is drawn aside to reveal a portrait gallery.<sup>411</sup> This gallery is rather lighter in appearance than the first, with a wooden floor and white-painted ceiling decorated

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<sup>407</sup> The 'Arundel marbles', as they became known, were among Howard's most prized (and celebrated) acquisitions, although as David Howarth observes, Howard was also a collector of paintings and drawings as well as classical sculptures. Howarth, *Lord Arundel*, p. 77.

<sup>408</sup> Howarth, *Lord Arundel*, p. 63.

<sup>409</sup> Howarth, 'Introduction', in *Thomas Howard*, p. 5.

<sup>410</sup> See Howarth, *Lord Arundel*, p. 14.

<sup>411</sup> In his *Inscriptiones*, Quiccheberg mentions that the Archduchess Anna of Austria (1528-1590), wife of Albrecht V, possessed her own portrait gallery. According to Quiccheberg, 'she honoured a certain, private chamber, with images of wives related to her, and other leading men joined in the closest relationship to her: and finally also of praised young maidens [...]', as well as an aviary, and a medicine chest. Quiccheberg, trans. by Leonardis, *Inscriptiones*, pp. 29-30.

with geometric patterns.<sup>412</sup> Large portraits in plain, dark frames are arranged in the interstices between windows on either side of the space, and smaller portraits are shown in between these spaces. Again, the gallery opens at the far end, this time onto a walled garden with a fountain. Two further companion portraits, of earlier date, are visible on either side of this threshold.

Both portraits are thought to relate to actual rooms in Arundel House, the now demolished London residence of Thomas and Alatheia in the Strand.<sup>413</sup> However, Howarth argues that Mytens' depiction of these Tudor rooms differed considerably from their appearance at the time these portraits were made. There was, for example, no barrel-vaulted ceiling or balcony overlooking the Thames,<sup>414</sup> and it is likely that the contents of the sculpture gallery had not yet been acquired by the Earl.<sup>415</sup> Howarth suggests, logically, that these images were intended for an audience who was unfamiliar with Arundel House; possibly Sir Dudley Carleton, from whom Arundel wished to purchase the collection of statues seen in the gallery in 1616, although ultimately the deal collapsed and the Arundels kept both portraits for themselves.<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>412</sup> The Countess designed buildings, and it is possible that the portrait gallery reflects her own architectural predilections. Howarth, *Lord Arundel*, p. 14.

<sup>413</sup> Inigo Jones was commissioned to redesign parts of Arundel House in the fashionable Italianate style during 1617-19, and Howarth suggests that Mytens' portraits represent a re-imagining of the portrait and sculpture galleries. See Howarth, *Lord Arundel*, pp. 57-9 and p. 63.

<sup>414</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>415</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>416</sup> Howarth suggests that Mytens' portrait of Arundel was designed to demonstrate the grand setting the sculptures would enjoy should Howard have been successful in acquiring them. *Ibid.*, pp. 58-9 and p. 63.



**Figure 17:**

**Daniel Mytens, *Alathea, Countess of Arundel and Surrey* (c. 1618). By kind permission of and © National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG 5293.**

While idealised, both portraits demonstrate the complex relationship between art and collecting practice in the early modern era, and between these and the creation of the sitter's identity through their collections. More than a statement of wealth and power, these *capriccio* images represent the desire to order and consume the world, through the acts of patronage, acquisition, ordering and display. In so doing, they embed symbols, concepts and practices which reflect the proposition, or vision, of the world enshrined within the cabinet. Moreover, as Stephen Orgel asserts, 'Any collection is the expression of the collector's taste and personality, in the fullest sense a manifestation of his – and in the case of the Arundels – her – mind'.<sup>417</sup>

Pendant portraits of husbands and wives were very popular in seventeenth-century Holland, rather than single-pair portraits in which husband and wife appeared together, within the same frame.<sup>418</sup> Mytens' portraits are roughly symmetrical in composition, and the sitters, though turned slightly toward the viewer, face each other. Each rests the hand closest to the viewer on the arm of a chair, while holding a symbolic object in the other. Thomas grasps a baton signifying his position and authority as Earl Marshal,<sup>419</sup> although he did not gain this office until 1621,<sup>420</sup> and Alatheia a handkerchief edged with lace, a fashionable accessory and possibly a symbol of the contract of matrimony.<sup>421</sup>

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<sup>417</sup> Orgel, 'Idols of the Gallery', p. 266.

<sup>418</sup> Berger Jr, 'Artificial Couples', p. 127.

<sup>419</sup> Gilman, 'Madagascar', p. 296.

<sup>420</sup> The office of Earl Marshal had traditionally belonged to Arundel's family, but he was not the sole possessor of the title until its conferral in 1621. Gilman, 'Madagascar', pp. 294 and 297.

<sup>421</sup> See Will Fisher, *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 38.

However, the paintings of Thomas and Alatheia are apparently not two views of the same, continuous space. When both pendants are viewed side by side it may be observed that the entrances to each gallery are of different heights, and the carpet and flagstones outside each threshold are of different patterns. Yet together they form a diptych which points to the successful marriage of two great collecting interests – painting and sculpture – while simultaneously referring to the literal marriage of the Earl and Countess.

Nevertheless, by physically separating the couple, Mytens suggests that each sitter presides over a demarcated territory or sphere of collecting activity, at once a physical and a symbolic space. As Berger observes,

The word *pendant* [...] suggests that the ideal relation between any pair of figures is achieved when each figure is shown to depend on and lean toward the other. The space between the frames is part of this relation: a marker of separateness, of relative independence, of confinement, but also [...] the marker of a site of public scrutiny, of exposure, and therefore of vulnerability; a reminder that the two sitters are never merely a dyad.<sup>422</sup>

Both sitters in Mytens' portrait are garbed in rich, but austere clothing and assume formal postures, unlike the more playful poses favoured in the later seventeenth century.<sup>423</sup> Like Van Haecht's portrayal of Cornelis van der Geest receiving visitors to his collection, both portraits are idealised, emblematic depictions of space and self. As Joanna Woods-Marsden

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<sup>422</sup> Berger Jr, 'Artificial Couples', pp. 127-9.

<sup>423</sup> Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), p. 425.

contends, ‘our modern distinction between the particular self, on the one hand, and his or her societal role, on the other, was not made [...] this was a culture in which identity was constructed largely through externals, one in which outward appearance was interpreted as, in effect, “reality” [...]’.<sup>424</sup>

For example, the portrait of Thomas Howard may be examined as evidence of the sitter’s high status, but there are details which only the ‘knowing’ eye would have been able to discern in the seventeenth century. In the fifteenth century, the discovery of perspective, defined by Gombrich as ‘the mathematical laws by which objects appear to diminish in size as they recede from us’, was to exert a major influence on early modern art, signifying the ‘conquest of reality’ itself.<sup>425</sup> Howard’s gesture with his staff points to the sculptures in the collection, but it also represents a line of sight. In linear perspective, this line represents the distance at which the beholder must stand in order for the painting’s representation of dimensions from standing place to the vanishing point of the landscape to equal those in reality.<sup>426</sup> This image is also, therefore, a means of creating an artificial space of viewing which constitutes not only a means of representing physical space, but of re-shaping space, creating an artificial, cultured world from natural materials. Moreover, it plays up its own artificiality, and as such speaks of the desire to use every means at one’s disposal to stretch the limits of representation as far as they could go. This, also, was the cabinet’s project, even as it realised its own impossibility, as did Quiccheberg in his *Inscriptiones*.

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<sup>424</sup> Woods-Marsden, ‘The Meaning of the European Painted Portrait’, p. 442.

<sup>425</sup> See Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, pp. 171-2.

<sup>426</sup> Ross Parry, ‘Museums as Media Environments’, Lecture, School of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, 17 February 2014.

## Framing and containing the world

Having considered the use of framing devices and spatial performances in pictorial art, this section will examine some of the different types of framing devices and their uses during the late medieval and early modern eras. In particular, it will focus upon the triptych, the ‘cabinet’ frame and the ‘peep’, or perspective box, using these examples to foreground how their form and function were assimilated by the cabinet. I shall begin by briefly expanding upon some of the philosophical implications of frames, boxes and containers as they existed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The frame has traditionally languished at the fringes of art historical discourse as a transitory object supplementary to the artwork it protects. Yet framing devices play a vital role not only in augmenting (or even detracting from) a work of art, they also form part of the complex physical apparatus which governs the act of viewing a painting. Moreover, frames were often designed to complement the architectural settings in which they were intended to be displayed.<sup>427</sup> As such, the frame also represents a liminal object belonging to the realms of both painting and furniture, as Claus Grimm observes.<sup>428</sup> Thus, while the frame is external to and usually physically divisible from the artwork, it is nevertheless integral to its meaning.

The frame and notions of framing have attracted considerable attention across a number of disciplines during the last fifteen years. In particular, the significance of frames in shaping

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<sup>427</sup> Nicholas Penny, *A Closer Look: Frames* (London: National Gallery Company Limited, 2010), p. 7.

<sup>428</sup> Claus Grimm, trans. by Nancy M. Gordon and Walter L. Strauss, *The Book of Picture Frames* (New York: Abaris, 1981 [1978]), p. 15.

the beholder's experience of art has been acknowledged by such scholars as Paul Duro,<sup>429</sup> inspired by the Derridean notion of parergonality, David Marshall,<sup>430</sup> who focuses upon how eighteenth-century art was consumed via the frame of aesthetic experience in fiction, and Paul Crowther who approaches the material frame from a phenomenological perspective.<sup>431</sup>

By the mid-seventeenth century, the sixteenth-century notion of *aemula* was still in existence,<sup>432</sup> but, as Paula Findlen argues, collectors now dwelled in 'an age obsessively preoccupied with the properties of representation'.<sup>433</sup> Furthermore, art historian Giulio Carlo Argan has contended that there had been a subtle shift from sixteenth- to seventeenth-century goals of representation, for, where Humanism had focussed upon the symbolic, and 'explaining meanings which are hidden beneath the appearance of the phenomenon or of the image; the problem here is to translate abstract conceptions into visible form'.<sup>434</sup> The seventeenth century, Argan suggests, sought to explore the

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<sup>429</sup> Paul Duro, ed., *The Rhetoric of the Frame: Essays on the Boundaries of the Artwork* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>430</sup> David Marshall, *The Frame of Art: Fictions of Aesthetic Experience, 1750-1815* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005).

<sup>431</sup> Paul Crowther, *Phenomenology of the Visual Arts (Even the Frame)* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009).

<sup>432</sup> See the dedicatory poem to John Tradescant the Elder published in 1656 in John Tradescant the Younger's *Musaeum Tradescantium*, p. A4:

Sure the Sun ne're rose  
Nor couch'd, but blush'd to see thy rooffe enclose  
More dainties than his orb.

<sup>433</sup> Findlen, *Possessing Nature*, p. 44.

<sup>434</sup> Giulio Carlo Argan, *The Baroque Age* (New York: Rizzoli, 1989), pp. 41 and 53.



representation of representation itself, and in so doing, transformed the symbols of sixteenth-century thought into complex allegories of the world.<sup>435</sup>

The notion of circumscribed worlds and their components was popular during the early modern period, and had long been a part of symbolic and allegorical representations of the world. Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle (c. 1623-1673), believed the world was made up of four atoms, and on this basis, speculated how many more worlds, invisible to the naked eye, might exist within even the tiniest item, such as the head of a pin.<sup>436</sup>

Moreover, as John Donne meditated in 1624, boxes, containers and their relationships to each other resembled both divine and temporal structures and hierarchies.<sup>437</sup> Implicit in his observation is the notion that all human understanding and its related practices are contingent, imperfect and subject to decay.

The seventeenth century also saw the development of increasingly specialised collecting apparatus, some of which, such as the Augsburg Art Cabinet, were indistinguishable from their contents. Nevertheless, as early as 1565, Samuel Quiccheberg had highlighted the importance of the container through his discussion of architecture, and by devoting an entire subcategory of his treatise to ‘little cabinets, chests, boxes, cases, small wicker-

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<sup>435</sup> For a discussion of metapictoriality in seventeenth-century painting, see Emmanuelle Hénin, ‘Parrhasius and the Stage Curtain: Theatre, Metapainting and the Idea of Representation in the Seventeenth Century’, in Caroline van Eck and Stijn Bussels, *Theatricality in Early Modern Art and Architecture* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp. 49-61. See also Foucault’s reading of Diego Velázquez’s 1656 painting *Las Meninas*, which he posits as ‘the representation [...] of Classical [seventeenth-century] representation, and the definition of the space it opens up to us’. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 17.

<sup>436</sup> Cavendish, ‘*Of Many Worlds in this World*’, p. 45.

<sup>437</sup> John Donne, ‘Tenth Meditation’, in *John Donne: Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*, ed. by Anthony Raspa (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987 [1624]), p. 51.

baskets, baskets, more wicker-baskets, platforms for rejoicing, bowls, [and] chests’,<sup>438</sup> and indeed his five categories may also be perceived as acts of containment. Moreover, crafting and presiding over a world in miniature, as Dagmar Weston has observed, made it infinitely ‘manipulable; it offers a degree of mastery or control over things and events’.<sup>439</sup>

Just as Quiccheberg’s treatise contained the idea of a much larger collection within its own confines, within the cabinet’s world, a single object might stand for the whole. The physician Walter Charleton’s (1619-1707) translation (and additions to) the work of Pierre Gassendi contains a description of the loadstone, a magnetised mineral, conceived as

the Egg and Epitome of the Terrestrial Globe; because as the Egg contains the Idaea of the whole and every part of its Protoplast or Generant, so doth the Loadstone comprehend the Idaea of the whole and every part of the Earth, and inherit all its Proprieties, being Generated thereby, at least therein: or His, Who named it The Nest of Wonders; because, as a Nest of Boxes, it includes many admirable Secrets, one within another, insomuch, that no man can well understand the mystical platform of its Nature, till he hath opened and speculated them all one after another [...]<sup>440</sup>

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<sup>438</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 22.

<sup>439</sup> Weston, ‘Worlds in Miniature’, p. 44.

<sup>440</sup> Walter Charleton, *Physiologia Epicuro-Gassendo-Charltoniana, or, A fabrick of science natural, upon the hypothesis of atoms founded by Epicurus repaired [by] Petrus Gassendus; augmented [by] Walter Charleton [...]* (London: Thomas Newcomb, 1654), Book Three, Section 16.1, p. 383.

## *The triptych*

Charleton's description of nested boxes opened and contemplated in sequence recalls earlier forms of visual culture such as the polyptych; literally, a work 'with many folds'.<sup>441</sup> Paintings with multiple and often hinged panels existed in antiquity, as well as in the religious art of medieval Byzantium, but also constituted a major feature of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century German and Netherlandish art.<sup>442</sup> This section will provide a brief outline of the triptych as a structural and compositional form which demonstrably influenced later practices of display, and is particularly evident in the display of painted panels within miniature cabinets of the seventeenth century, which will be examined in the next section. Here, I shall focus upon a well-known example of a triptych, the Flemish artist Hieronymous Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights* (c. 1490-1510). In particular, I shall consider how the work's formal and compositional elements combine with the artist's rich iconographical language to form a complex meditation on both the temporal and spiritual worlds it represents.

Arguably Bosch's most ambitious work, the *Garden of Earthly Delights* (Figure 18) presents a threefold vision, from left to right panels, of Paradise, the Earth and the torments of Hell. The right panel depicts God presenting the newly-created Eve to Adam within an intricate landscape populated by the recognisable and the fantastic in Nature, from cats to composite creatures. The large central panel frames a view of the eponymous Garden, in

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<sup>441</sup> The terms 'polyptych' and 'triptych' are neologisms, and were unknown during the antique, medieval and early modern eras. See Lynn F. Jacobs, *Opening Doors: The Early Netherlandish Triptych Reinterpreted* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University, 2012), p. 2.

<sup>442</sup> Jacobs, *Opening Doors*, p. 1.

which naked men and women take their pleasures with abandon – feasting and carousing among gigantic fruits, birds and beasts. The left panel also depicts a garden – but a garden become a desolate waste, illuminated by fiery light, in which animal-headed monsters torture human beings, playing their contorted bodies like musical instruments.



**Figure 18:**

**Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (c. 1490-1510), opened triptych, oil on panel. By kind permission and © Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, P02823.**

When left and right panels are closed, two grisaille paintings on their reverse come together to create a fourth image depicting a spherical world like a glass ball, in which a landscape is poised like a disc (Figure 19). The image of God on the upper left corner of the left panel and the two Latin inscriptions at the top of both panels indicate that this is a view of the

third day of Creation.<sup>443</sup> While in some ways typical of early Netherlandish triptychs, Bosch's iconography, composition and formal constructions, in particular the relationship between the painted panels, incorporate many unusual elements.

Triptychs were religious objects, which were often, but not always,<sup>444</sup> designed as altarpieces. Bosch created approximately sixteen triptychs in total,<sup>445</sup> but scholars disagree as to whether the *Garden of Earthly Delights* was intended as an altarpiece, or was commissioned for a lay patron instead. Marijnissen, for example, considers all of Bosch's triptychs as altarpieces,<sup>446</sup> while other commentators such as Walter Bosing consider the subject matter of this work inappropriate for an ecclesiastical setting.<sup>447</sup> Lynn Jacobs perceives Bosch's triptych as a radical departure from artworks focusing on the spiritual world to a work whose central focus is upon the temporal realm,<sup>448</sup> and based on this, and surviving documentation establishing the painting's whereabouts during the early sixteenth century, suggests that it was originally intended for the Dukes of Nassau, at their palace in Brussels.<sup>449</sup>

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<sup>443</sup> Roger Marijnissen translates these, from left to right, as words from Psalm 33:9: 'Ipse dixit et facta su[n]t', 'For He spoke, and it was', and 'Ipse ma[n]davit et creata su[n]t', 'He commanded, and it stood'. Marijnissen, *Hieronymus Bosch: The Complete Works* (Antwerp: Mercatorfonds, 1987), p. 87. See also Jacobs, *Opening Doors*, p. 218.

<sup>444</sup> For a discussion of the multiple functions of the early Netherlandish triptych within ecclesiastical settings, see Jacobs, *Opening Doors*, pp. 15-20.

<sup>445</sup> Lynn F. Jacobs, 'The Triptychs of Hieronymus Bosch', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 31.4 (2000), pp. 1009-1041 (p. 1010).

<sup>446</sup> Marijnissen, *Bosch*, p. 51.

<sup>447</sup> Walter Bosing, *Bosch: The Complete Paintings* (Köln: Midpoint Press and Taschen, 2001 [1973]), p. 60.

<sup>448</sup> Jacobs, *Opening Doors*, p. 189.

<sup>449</sup> Jacobs, 'Triptychs of Hieronymus Bosch', p. 1019 and p. 1039.



**Figure 19:**

**Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (c. 1490-1510), outer wings of triptych, grisaille on panel. By kind permission and © Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado.**

As Roger Marijnissen and Shirley Blum have observed, there were established conventions and hierarchies of framing within Netherlandish triptychs, which enabled the beholder to decipher the conceptual relationship between the different elements of the work. The paintings selected for the exterior panels typically served as ‘an iconographical introduction to the subject of the opened triptych’,<sup>450</sup> although for Bosch’s enigmatic work, these have also been interpreted as establishing a ‘symmetry’ of theme with their contents, as the

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<sup>450</sup> Marijnissen, *Hieronymus Bosch*, p. 51.

exterior panels display a more prominent and complex symbolism than is typical.<sup>451</sup> On opening a triptych, Shirley Blum argues that the central panel commands the beholder's attention first, for its size and position indicate that it conveys the central message of the work. From here, the beholder's gaze moves outward to the two surrounding panels, for the 'subordinate' message.<sup>452</sup> However, these panels may also be read from left to right, as Marijnissen observes.<sup>453</sup>

Danto contends that frames define the 'pictorial attitudes to be taken toward a painting, which does not, on its own, suffice for these purposes'.<sup>454</sup> On first viewing, these paintings with their density of compositional elements and the feverish activity of their inhabitants, can be difficult to read as a cohesive narrative. It is therefore the frame which sets the painting in context, and which refers the beholder to the familiar story of the Creation and the tripartite nature of the Christian cosmos. Thus, in Bosch's triptych, God creates the world, but Eve disobeys God's command leading to the banishment from Paradise; the children of Adam and Eve create their own paradise on earth but in so doing commit the sin of lust, and are punished for their transgressions in the next world. As Walter Bosing observes, the encapsulation of a world (or worlds) in their totality is a central feature of Bosch's triptych, for

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<sup>451</sup> Jacobs, 'Triptychs of Hieronymous Bosch', pp. 1019 and 1022.

<sup>452</sup> Shirley Neilsen Blum, *Early Netherlandish Triptychs: A Study in Patronage* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), p. 4. For a discussion of the 'subordinating center', see Jacobs, *Opening Doors*, p. 2.

<sup>453</sup> Marijnissen, *Bosch*, p. 50.

<sup>454</sup> Danto, *After the End of Art*, p. xii.

its iconographical programme, encompassing the whole of history, betrays the same urge for universality that we encounter in the façade sculptures of a Gothic cathedral or in the contemporary cycles of mystery plays. Nevertheless, it also reflects the Renaissance taste for highly original, intricate allegories whose full meaning is apparent only to a limited audience.<sup>455</sup>

The four distinct, enclosed worlds of Bosch's painting are thus demarcated by the notions of doors, boundaries, frames, thresholds and their symbolism. However, despite these divisions, Jacobs observes an unusual unity of composition in Bosch's triptych, citing as a particular example, the horizon line, embedded deep in all three paintings, which remains consistent throughout, as do the bodies of water in the central landscape. Furthermore, the small group of figures in the lower left corner of the central panel appear to gesture to the central group of figures in the Garden of Eden.<sup>456</sup> However, Blum contends that the work relies upon 'unification by analogical thought units rather than by visual logic'.<sup>457</sup>

Crucially, Bosch's triptych contains an extraordinary level of minute detail, but simultaneously demands to be studied in its entirety,<sup>458</sup> inviting the beholder to form relationships between the panels and their appearance within the triptych. Yet, as Blum observes of all triptychs, their 'total iconographic program can never be seen at one time, for they contain separate interior and exterior images'.<sup>459</sup> Jacobs offers an interesting

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<sup>455</sup> Bosing, *Bosch*, p. 60.

<sup>456</sup> Jacobs, *Opening Doors*, p. 217.

<sup>457</sup> Blum, *Early Netherlandish Triptychs*, p. 5.

<sup>458</sup> Marijnissen, *Bosch*, p. 98.

<sup>459</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.



explanation for this feature; that the acts of opening and closing a triptych were themselves symbolic in nature. Triptychs, Jacobs argues, were often referred to during the early modern era as ‘paintings with doors’, not only implying that these objects were instrumental in creating physical boundaries between different visual fields, but that symbolically, ‘the triptych, with the opening of its wings, structurally embodies the concepts of epiphany and revelation’.<sup>460</sup>

The triptych form in art thus provides an interesting example of a construction which seeks both to segregate and to join together the elements of which it is composed. This tendency in *The Garden of Earthly Delights* is well-illustrated by its first image, the sphere of the world depicted *en grisaille* on the exterior wings. This image is bisected not only by the composition, horizontally, but by the panels, vertically. Thus, this painted world is itself literally transformed into a cabinet whose contents may be opened and examined. Moreover, the hiding and revelation of objects was an integral spatial performance in the experience of early modern collections.

### *The cabinet frame and the trompe l’oeil*

Frames and framing devices are part of what Derrida describes as ‘the unstable *topos* of ornamentality’.<sup>461</sup> The frame of an image may thus be conceived as a type of *parergon*, without which an artwork such as Bosch’s *Garden of Earthly Delights* would lose an integral part of its narrative structure, meaning and context. Yet *parerga* may take many

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<sup>460</sup> Jacobs, *Opening Doors*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>461</sup> Derrida, ‘Parergon’, p. 16.

forms, from the physical construct in which a work was housed, to other, supplementary details in a painting which acted in a similar manner. Moreover, as Bosch's work illustrates, frame and artwork, *parergon* and *ergon*, are frequently entangled. This section examines some of the formal and symbolic elements of the frame in seventeenth-century paintings. However, this section by no means encompasses a comprehensive reading of the many different types of frame which existed during this period. Instead, it focuses upon two examples of frames, one a physical frame, the other a pictorial device, which illustrate how early modern responses to framing images embodied similar concepts and representational strategies to the early modern cabinet.

Few paintings from the early modern era have survived with their frames intact.<sup>462</sup> Indeed, Danto notes that many frames were removed during the Modernist era, a period which roughly extends from the 1860s to the 1970s, as 'distractions' to the 'formal visual interest' of the work.<sup>463</sup> However, it is also accurate to state that many frames were discarded in far earlier periods owing to changing styles and conceptions of taste, or simply because they had worn out.<sup>464</sup> Museums and galleries have played a pivotal role in establishing conventions of framing, often altering the form or appearance of an individual artwork in order to fulfil the perceived greater needs of the space of representation. Hence, the display of Nicolas Poussin's (1594-1665) *The Adoration of the Golden Calf* (1633-4), a large-scale

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<sup>462</sup> The National Gallery, Glossary, 'Frames', 2013.

<sup>463</sup> Danto, *After the End of Art*, p. 16.

<sup>464</sup> Paul Mitchell and Lynn Roberts, *Frameworks: Form, Function & Ornament in European Portrait Frames* (London: Merrell Holberton, 1996), p. 12.

history painting, in London's National Gallery within a particularly sumptuous early eighteenth-century frame, although it is known that the artist preferred simple frames.<sup>465</sup>

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the physical frame of a painting was not always constructed or even chosen by the artist, although many early modern artists created their own, pictorial framing devices, such as the 'garland painting', a (usually devotional) image surrounded by painted fruits and flowers arranged in a wreath.<sup>466</sup> Mitchell and Roberts note that many Northern European frames were produced by cabinet-makers,<sup>467</sup> and that these were simple, rectangular and window-like in appearance, often constructed from oak, which may have been 'ebonised', that is, veneered with ebony or another costly wood,<sup>468</sup> with gilded or silvered 'sight edges',<sup>469</sup> rather like those of the pendant paintings depicted in Mytens' portrait of the Countess of Arundel.

An example of a group of cabinet frames appears in Figure 20. The interior of this ebonised Antwerp cabinet, whose corpus was constructed in c. 1640-1660, showcases a number of panel paintings in oils. Interestingly, this miniature cabinet also resembles a polyptych. While commentators such as Blum argue that the triptych was a short-lived phenomenon,<sup>470</sup> other commentators such as Jacobs argue that it was simply put to new uses in the early

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<sup>465</sup> Despite being an accretion, the frame is kept with the painting as both an illustration of the history of the artwork and changing attitudes to it, and as an object of interest in its own right, as one of the most elaborate frames of its era. The National Gallery, 'Frames', 2013.

<sup>466</sup> See Merriam, *Seventeenth-century Flemish Garland Paintings*, p. 2.

<sup>467</sup> Mitchell and Roberts, *Frameworks*, p. 88.

<sup>468</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>469</sup> Simon, *The Art of the Picture Frame*, p. 13.

<sup>470</sup> Blum states that by the end of the fifteenth century, 'the triptych form remained, but its symbolic structure was largely ignored'. See Blum, *Early Netherlandish Triptychs*, p. 114.

modern period.<sup>471</sup> Like Bosch's triptych, the Antwerp cabinet is deployed as a means of narrating a Biblical parable, that of the Prodigal Son. The cabinet opens to reveal two large painted panels on the reverse of each door, which showcase two important scenes from the beginning and end of the tale, depicting the departure of the Prodigal Son on the left door, and his return home, penniless and in rags, on the right. The cabinet's *corpus* incorporates eight smaller painted scenes upon each drawer front, and two images are framed by an architectonic niche with columns, an arch and a balustrade which also forms the central cupboard door. These smaller images may be read from left to right, and from top to bottom, apart from the central images, which depict the Prodigal Son receiving his inheritance (above) and feasting with his family (below). Unlike Bosch's triptych, however, there are no paintings or carvings on the cabinet's exterior: the austere ebony frame was chosen to surprise the beholder by presenting the maximum possible contrast with the gilding and brightly coloured oil paintings within.

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<sup>471</sup> Jacobs, *Opening Doors*, p. 189.



**Figure 20:**

**A cabinet produced in Antwerp, Belgium, in c. 1640-1660 (on a stand of later date) used as a framing device for painted panels depicting scenes from the Biblical parable of the Prodigal Son. The upper section of the cabinet comprises a lid which, if lifted, displays another larger painting of the eponymous Son carousing. Cabinets such as this one were often quickly produced, the carpentry and paintings executed separately. Neither the artist(s) nor the carpenter of this cabinet are known. By kind permission of and © Victoria and Albert Museum, London, W.61:1 to 3-1923.**

The Antwerp cabinet held further surprises for its beholder, however. On lifting the upper lid, another large panel is revealed, depicting the prodigal son carousing, possibly by a different artist. The hiding of an object in plain sight was common within the cabinet – some miniature cabinets literally exhorted their owners to look deeper, such as the early seventeenth-century ‘Arundel’ cabinet, which once occupied Tart Hall, a residence of the Countess of Arundel, whose doors open to reveal two magnificent architectural interiors and a colourful frieze painted with scenes from classical mythology. Above these images appear the Latin words, inlaid in ivory, *ALTIUS HIC SCRUTARE LATENT SUB FRONDIBUS UVAE*, or ‘Search deeper here. Grapes are concealed beneath the foliage’.<sup>472</sup> The frieze could be lifted away to reveal concealed drawers.

Moreover, at the heart of the Antwerp cabinet, behind the central, arched panel, is a five-sided mirrored ‘perspective’, a small alcove resembling a miniature room with black and white tiles, a balustrade and columns. Another mirror is affixed to the reverse of the cupboard door. Renier Baarsen suggests that this space would have been used for a single object such as a small sculpture, which the beholder would then be able to view from multiple angles at once.<sup>473</sup> Arguably, however, this tiny space also constituted a symbolic nod to the infinite – the room and its contents being endlessly mirrored into the farthest recesses of the cabinet, and giving the illusion that the space was much bigger than it was, just as the cabinet’s iconographical programme encompasses an unfolding tale within a limited space. Moreover, as Baarsen has observed, the display of paintings in this miniature

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<sup>472</sup> Howarth, *Thomas Howard*, p. 51.

<sup>473</sup> ‘Perspectives’ were a characteristic feature of seventeenth-century cabinets produced in Antwerp. Baarsen, *17<sup>th</sup>-Century Cabinets*, p. 25.

setting resemble the miniature representations of paintings in images such as Van Haecht's *Cabinet of Cornelis van der Geest*. Thus, 'in a single piece of furniture the buyer obtained a miniature painting collection from the city of the great Rubens'.<sup>474</sup>

The artisanship of the cabinet itself might reflect some of the themes and motifs found in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century paintings, especially the 'still life'. The Netherlands artist Gerrit Dou (1613-1675) painted a number of *bedriegertjes*, or illusionistic *vanitas* which show an affinity with the Italian *trompe l'oeil* intarsia panels and still life paintings appearing on *cassoni* or marriage chests as well as cupboard doors of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Bergström notes that according to an early twentieth-century source, Dou's best paintings were hung within miniature cupboards, ostensibly to protect them from light and dust, on the doors of which Dou had painted further still life images.<sup>475</sup> In fact, this recalls the ancient practice of painting walls with paintings of still lifes upon them, complete with frames and shutters. Bergström argues that the effect of this was that 'his small cupboard was no longer a mute piece of furniture, but gave the room more depth'.<sup>476</sup> This is an interesting observation, as it suggests that these paintings did more than simply adorn a room – they enhanced it spatially as well as aesthetically.

In his phenomenological approach to the frame as object, Paul Crowther argues that framing devices 'have the practical effect [...] of clearly demarcating pictorial space, and

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<sup>474</sup> Baarsen, *17<sup>th</sup>-Century Cabinets*, pp. 26-7. While Rubens himself did not create paintings for cabinets, the oil paintings contained within Antwerp cabinets often emulated the style of Rubens, or even produced copies of his works (pp. 24 and 27).

<sup>475</sup> Bergström, *Dutch Still-Life Painting*, p. 182.

<sup>476</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

signifying its difference from ordinary perceptual space'.<sup>477</sup> However, not only were seventeenth-century framing devices arguably more complex than this explanation allows, at times they actively sought to subvert the notion of the frame itself. For example, Cornelius Norbertus Gijsbrechts' illusory *The Reverse of a Framed Painting* (1670) is another painting of a painting, but of the reverse of the canvas on its stretching frame (Figure 21). The unpainted wooden frame surrounding the canvas provides a detailed rendering of its joinery, the light and shadow which fall across it, and the rough paint strokes at its edges from where the front of the frame has been ebonised. A tiny slip of slightly crumpled paper bearing the number 36 – a possible reference to a sales number – is affixed to the canvas with red sealing wax. This image was intended to deceive the viewer into thinking they have to turn the 'painting' around, and Schneider suggests that it may have been hung at a sales exhibition 'as a practical joke'.<sup>478</sup> Indeed, this type of painting was known as a *betriegertje*, or 'little trickster'.<sup>479</sup> Thus, provided this work was displayed unframed and was carefully positioned within the right setting, the beholder might be fooled into seeing the representation itself as a 'real' object. This object was therefore designed to assimilate the wall, and the architectural setting in which it was placed, so that these became elements of the painting and its framing device. At the same time, Gijsbrechts' work constitutes a commentary on the practices of representation, framing and display which reveals the proscenium arch through which paintings are viewed for what it is: an artificial construct, a stage prop.

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<sup>477</sup> Crowther, *Phenomenology of the Visual Arts*, p. 54.

<sup>478</sup> See Schneider, *Still Life*, p. 23.

<sup>479</sup> A similar form of *betriegertje* which is more commonly found was a still-life painting with an illusionistic curtain half-drawn over it, such as Adrian van der Spelt's *Flower Still Life with Curtain* (1658).





**Figure 21:**

**Cornelius Gijsbrechts' *The Reverse of a Framed Painting*, (1670), oil on canvas. This painting was listed in the inventory of the Royal Danish Kunstkammer in 1674.<sup>480</sup> By kind permission of Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen and National Gallery of Denmark, KMS1989.**

Gijsbrechts was painter to the Danish court in Copenhagen in 1670-2, and specialised in *trompe l'oeil* pieces.<sup>481</sup> He expanded his ideas still further by creating illusionistic paintings of groups of objects such as *An Open Cabinet of Curiosities with a Hercules Group* (1670), and finally, by creating painted works which were also cupboards, such as *A Cupboard with Works of Art*, (1670). This piece features a painted panel of objects behind glass, with a metal grill into which papers are inserted. If a key is turned, the 'cupboard' opens, concealing a space in which the objects depicted might in fact be stored. The work thus

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<sup>480</sup> Eva de la Fuente Pedersen, Statens Museum for Kunst, Highlights, Cornelius Norbertus Gijsbrechts, *Trompe l'oeil. The Reverse of a Framed Painting*, 1670.

<sup>481</sup> Schneider, *Still Life*, p. 212.

constituted an assemblage of frame, painting, two-dimensional objects, three-dimensional objects and enclosed space.

Derrida's *parergon* thus allows for a more entangled view of the early modern framing device. For Derrida, what identifies *parerga* is

not simply their exteriority as surplus, it is the internal structural link which rivets them to the lack in the interior of the *ergon*. And this lack would be constitutive of the very unity of the *ergon* [...] The *ergon*'s lack is a lack of *parergon* [...] <sup>482</sup>

Thus, in Derridean terms, the *parergon* is distinctive in that it is not always obvious, but rather 'it disappears, buries itself, effaces itself, melts away at the moment it deploys its greatest energy', <sup>483</sup> as it does in Gijsbrechts' painting, or indeed in the Augsburg Art Cabinet.

### *The peep box*

The final example I wish to discuss is a particularly complex example of a framing device: Samuel van Hoogstraten's (1627-78) 'peep' box, constructed in 1655-60 (Figures 22, 23 and 24). Peep boxes, also known as peep shows and perspective boxes, may be defined as closed wooden boxes of triangular, rectangular, or occasionally pentagonal construction in which a series of anamorphic images of an interior were painted. On viewing these images through a small aperture, they coalesced to form the illusion of a three-dimensional space. Celeste Brusati differentiates the Dutch perspective box from comparable objects such as

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<sup>482</sup> Derrida, 'Parergon', pp. 59-60.

<sup>483</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

the German ‘peep show’, boxes containing three-dimensional figures in wax, by their central void: the only thing peep boxes contained were two-dimensional images.<sup>484</sup> Peep boxes are thus defined as a purely Dutch<sup>485</sup> phenomenon which drew upon perspectival geometry and the new science of optics in order to entice their viewers to explore imaginary spaces in a novel way. This section will consider Hoogstraten’s peep box as a symbolic form whose spatial practices resonate with those of the cabinet in its guise as a literal and figurative nest of boxes.

Only six complete perspective boxes from the seventeenth century now survive, and all depict either a domestic or an ecclesiastical interior.<sup>486</sup> Hoogstraten’s peep box is a particularly complex example, and comprises a rectangular box of oak,<sup>487</sup> open on one side. Originally, a frame or translucent piece of paper would have been placed here, and a light source would have been placed next to this to illuminate the box’s contents. The interior of Hoogstraten’s box is painted on five sides, and depicts a series of rooms within a Dutch household which open out onto one another by means of thresholds, open doors, windows and mirrors. At times, the beholder may glimpse the outside world, for example in Figure 23 where an external door has been left open. The rooms contain an assemblage of different objects: furniture, clothing, weapons, jewellery and personal effects, as well as a large number of paintings, some in fashionable gilded frames (Figure 23). Hoogstraten has also

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<sup>484</sup> Celeste Brusati, *Artifice and Illusion: The Art and Writing of Samuel Van Hoogstraten* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 169.

<sup>485</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>486</sup> Martha Hollander, *An Entrance for the Eyes: Space and Meaning in Seventeenth-century Dutch Art*, p. 125.

<sup>487</sup> Joyce Plesters, ‘The Materials and Technique of the ‘Peepshow’ in Relation to Hoogstraten’s Book’, *National Gallery Technical Bulletin*, 11 (1987), 77-84 (p. 82).

painted some of the occupants of the house: a woman in bed, a seated woman reading a book at a window outside which a man can be seen looking in and a dog (Figure 23). As Bazin argues, seventeenth-century Dutch artists aimed to represent ‘space in its totality’.<sup>488</sup>



**Figure 22:**

*A Peepshow with Views of the Interior of a Dutch House*, Samuel van Hoogstraten, (c. 1655-60), on a modern stand. This view shows the open side of the box outside which a light source would have been placed. The left and right sides of the box are pierced by peep holes which enable the beholder to view the constructed interior from different angles, including above and below. By kind permission of and © The National Gallery, London, NG3832.

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<sup>488</sup> Germain Bazin, *The Baroque: Principles, Styles, Modes, Themes* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968), p. 91.

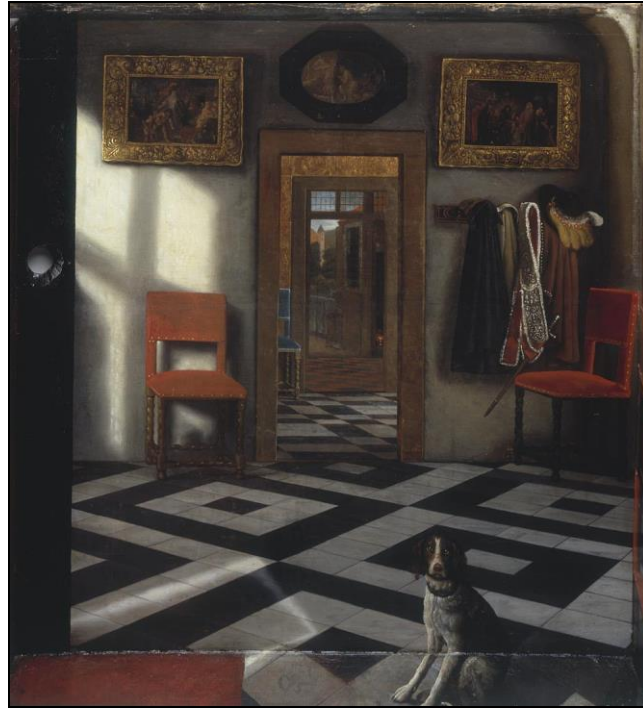


Figure 23:

A view within Hoogstraten's *Peepshow*, which depicts frames within frames. This room containing three picture frames and at least two windows leads to two further rooms, and the viewer may gaze through the rectangular doorframes to the open door leading to the outside world. This image is itself framed by the angle of vision adopted by the beholder: as a result of this full-frontal vision, for example, the hindquarters of the dog, in fact part of the adjoining painting, appear slightly crooked. By kind permission of and © The National Gallery, London.

Though Christopher Brown considers this to be an 'entirely imaginary' space,<sup>489</sup> according to Brusati, these spaces can be understood as representations of Hoogstraten's own home.

A letter addressed to the artist at his home in Dordrecht appears upon a chair, and Hoogstraten's coat of arms hangs upon a wall. Not only is this an act of self-representation,

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<sup>489</sup> Christopher Brown, 'Introduction: Samuel van Hoogstraten: Perspective and Painting', in *National Gallery Technical Bulletin*, 11 (1987), 60-85 (p. 63).

but Brusati notes that the painted interior contains ‘a veritable encyclopaedia of images and “imagings”’.<sup>490</sup> As such, she argues, it also resembles the miniature art collections encountered in Van Haecht’s painting of paintings, and in addition, within the Antwerp cabinet.

Unusually, Hoogstraten’s box has two peep holes, on opposite sides of the box, from which to view its contents. Putting one’s eye to one peep hole would therefore grant the beholder a completely different view of the interior to the other. Hoogstraten was not necessarily attempting to represent reality, however, but rather to demonstrate a construct which ‘ordered a view into an assemblage of contiguous spaces’.<sup>491</sup> As Gombrich observes, perspective presents the illusion of reality, and ‘Neither this nor any other system can claim that it represents the world ‘as it appears’, but within the orthodox perspectival arrangement, we deal with tangible, measurable relationships’.<sup>492</sup> The peep box represented space rendered comprehensible, portable and hence, mastered. Thus, as Hollander argues, these are not ‘extensions of our space, but separate spaces, enclosed and presented by their frames, offering [...] sealed views of the miniature interior. We are not invited to go inside them, only to look’.<sup>493</sup> Moreover, the relationships between each image are established by the framing device, meaning these miniature worlds can only exist *inside* their box.

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<sup>490</sup> Brusati, *Artifice and Illusion*, p. 178.

<sup>491</sup> Martha Hollander, *An Entrance for the Eyes*, p. 125.

<sup>492</sup> Ernst Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, 6<sup>th</sup> edn (London: Phaidon, 2002), p. 217.

<sup>493</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

Hoogstraten's box, like Bosch's triptych, also provides an iconographical introduction to its subject matter. The box is inscribed on its three external sides with allegorical paintings accompanied by the Latin mottoes *Amoris Causa*, *Lucri Causa* and *Gloriae Causa*: Love of Art, Love of Wealth (Figure 24) and Love of Glory. These images and their mottoes have been interpreted by Brusati as a declaration of Hoogstraten's motives for creating the box, but also reflect the multifaceted perspectives on love encapsulated within the Augsburg Art Cabinet. The anamorphosis on the top of the box is a representation of Venus and Cupid in bed, and hence, physical love. As Brusati observes, there is an overall slightly risqué<sup>494</sup> overtone to the peep box, in which the beholder's intruding gaze enters a private, hidden world which was undoubtedly designed to entertain as well as to showcase the artist's skill in crafting such a convincing illusion. As much as it is a commentary on practices of looking, the peep box possibly also functions as a *vanitas*, through its performance as well as its symbolic qualities, in which the pleasures of this world are laid out to seduce the unwary.

As framing devices, peep boxes also relate to themes of multiplicity and plurality which reflect Quiccheberg's flexible categories explored in Chapter One. Svetlana Alpers states that the peep box was 'a construction that also offered various views adding up to make a single world [...] No single view dominates in the interest of this additive way of piecing together the world'.<sup>495</sup> Hoogstraten's peep box thus enabled the artist to create the illusion, not only of many worlds contained within a single box, but of multiple worlds seen from

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<sup>494</sup> Brusati, *Artifice and Illusion*, p. 181-2.

<sup>495</sup> Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (London: John Murray and University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 163.

two distinct vantage points. Moreover, devices such as peep boxes represent what Alpers calls the ‘double aspect of pictorial representation’, in that they not only ‘document *what* appears’; they also ‘render *how* it appears’.<sup>496</sup> As such, Hoogstraten’s peep box reflects the some of the governing principles and preoccupations of the seventeenth-century cabinet, as well as the spatial practices which allowed the world to be grasped in a box through the collector’s gaze. Akin to Quiccheberg’s fourth category of tools and instruments, the peep box articulates the means by which a world is rendered in miniature.



Figure 24:

***Lucri Causa*, or Love of Wealth, one of three allegories denoting the artist’s motivations for his creation, showing a putto with a cornucopia spilling sacks of coins while in the background the artist can be seen working on another creation; a portrait of a lady. By kind permission of and © The National Gallery, London.**

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<sup>496</sup> Alpers, *The Art of Describing*, p. 38.



## Conclusions

Arthur MacGregor has argued that despite drawing upon numerous existing sources and models of collecting, the curiosity cabinet represented ‘an entirely novel construct manifested in the realms of both the arts and sciences and, more particularly, in society at large’.<sup>497</sup> Yet the sixteenth-century concept of the ‘microcosmic’ cabinet, designed to be universal in scope, created problems of relationship and organisation that could only be resolved with recourse to older frames of reference, for

The universe distilled within the confines of a chamber was [...] a concept that could be realised only in token form and to this end an elaborate allusory vocabulary was developed that reconciled these ambitions by devices adopted from the fields of literature and rhetoric.<sup>498</sup>

Thus the cabinet was itself haunted by earlier forms of practice, and, possessing little in the way of a developed curatorial language of its own, naturally drew upon existing modes of visual communication in the realms of art and allegory in order to arrange and display collections. The cabinet, in sum, was a chimera, which absorbed the visual arts, and turned them to its own purposes and yet was itself reflected, and put on display, in depictions of collectors and their collections in paintings, drawings and engravings. Art and the cabinet thus enjoyed a symbiotic relationship, so that each resembled the other as cultural objects, acts of framing the world and conduits of meaning.

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<sup>497</sup> MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 10.

<sup>498</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

Knowledge itself was perceived to be primarily visual in this era, and part of a slow movement away from textual authority towards that of the object.<sup>499</sup> Moreover, the borders between different forms of understanding, like the borders between objects in Quiccheberg's treatise, were dependent on a certain kind of intellectual porosity which permitted current as well as past forms of cultural practice, consciously or unconsciously, to shape those of the present.

This chapter has also demonstrated that by studying the spatial practices of art and visual culture contemporaneous with the cabinet, we can better understand how the different ways in which the collections such as the Augsburg Art Cabinet were seen to perform as theatres of the world. In particular, these practices reveal a preoccupation with framing objects in order to place them within a specific context and visual hierarchy, revelation, through the opening of doors and drawers, the use of illusion and anamorphosis, and containment – singling out an aspect of the world and considering its relationship to others. By such methods, the world was transformed into an image which could be set before the gaze of the collector *in spettacolo* – as if he or she were in a theatre.<sup>500</sup>

This chapter has also given a sense of how some of the concepts and strategies developed by Quiccheberg were built upon during the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, which witnessed the increasing importance of framing devices. The popular notion of the 'nest of boxes' provided a viable structural conduit for the early modern exploration of the

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<sup>499</sup> Sven Dupré and Christoph Lüthy, 'Introduction: Silent Messengers. The World of Goods and the Circulation of Knowledge in the Early Modern Netherlands', in Sven Dupré and Christoph Lüthy, eds., *Silent Messengers: The Circulation of Material Objects of Knowledge in the Early Modern Low Countries* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2011), pp. 1-12 (p. 10).

<sup>500</sup> Yates, *Art of Memory*, p. 136.

self through space, and furnished a conceptual vantage point from which to reflect upon – and allegorise – the act and performance of pictorial representation itself.

The early modern cabinet was truly a ‘Chamber of Artifices’ in that it used objects and images to construct an artificial world which miniaturised the known cosmos and positioned it beneath a lens of the collector’s choosing. Yet as John Donne observed in his reflection upon the Concentric, or temporal world and the Eccentric world of the imagination, which appears at the start of this chapter, there were things humankind couldn’t build, or demonstrate, only imagine. Thus, just as there were worlds within worlds, so were there worlds beyond worlds, alluded to by such pictorial devices as vanishing point perspective, fleeting glimpses of the world ‘beyond’ the construct, and mirrored spaces which appeared to stretch off into infinity.

The next chapter focuses upon a specialised form of early modern visual practice. Here, I argue that the approach to objects in the early modern ‘still life’ painting is in many ways comparable to their treatment in the cabinet. Furthermore, artists’ preoccupation with transience and decay helps illuminate the conditions of representation in early modern collections.

## Chapter Four

### The Mirror of the Cabinet: Contemporary Still Life Painting

Are wee not more delighted with seeing Birds, Fruites, and Beasts *painted* than wee are with Naturalls?

John Donne, 'That Women ought to paint', 1652 [1633] <sup>501</sup>

All things are Artificial, for Nature is the Art of God.

Thomas Browne, *Nature's Cabinet Unlock'd*, 1657 <sup>502</sup>

A seventeenth-century painting by Spanish artist Antonio de Pereda (1611-1678) reveals a small but richly decorated cabinet resting upon a table covered in a deep scarlet cloth (Figure 25). Its corners are edged with gilded metal, and its drawers are painted with a delicate black foliate design, roughly symmetrical, upon a pale background. The cabinet forms the centrepiece of the composition, with a selection of luxury objects – in fact, other containers – arranged on top of it: objects of glass, metal and earthenware, painted in hues of black, gold and red. A spherical glass container reflects these colours, as well as the light source which illuminates them; a window in the upper left of the painting. Splashes of red

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<sup>501</sup> John Donne, 'That Women ought to paint', in *Juvenilia: or certaine Paradoxes, and Problems*, in Helen Gardner and Timothy Healy, eds., *John Donne: Selected Prose* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 7-8 (p. 8).

<sup>502</sup> Thomas Browne, *Nature's Cabinet Unlock'd* (London: Edward Farnham, 1657), p. 250.

are reflected in the gilding of the ornate black vessel on top of the cabinet. The top drawer of the cabinet is partly open, and a folded, richly-woven cloth of red, gold, black and white in geometric patterns overflows from within.



**Figure 25:**

**Antonio de Pereda's *Still Life with an Ebony Chest* (1652). There appear to be four drawers but are in fact three, as the upper set is conjoined. On the surface of one, a false keyhole is visible, and to the left of this a key has turned in a lock hidden in shadow, its bolt visible at the top of the drawer. By kind permission of The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia. Photo by Svetlana Suetova and Leonard Kheifets. Photograph © The State Hermitage Museum. GE-327.**

The cabinet's visible contents, workmanship and the presence of keys indicate a receptacle for precious household items. The viewer's gaze and desire is directed to the cloth – as though it were possible to reach out and remove it from its setting in order to explore the contents of the cabinet: a painted tantalus in two dimensions. It evokes the desire not just to

gaze, but to consume this virtual world of things: an act as much cerebral as physical, and one whose performance is made the more self-aware for being constructed from represented objects.

Extending the gaze outwards, a small meal of meat, cheese and baked goods is set up in the foreground of the painting, and the objects here are decorative, but betray traces of wear, even damage, from the chip in the blue and white vessel on the left, to the lip of the jug on the right, whose painted surface has worn away in places. From here, it is apparent that the cabinet itself bears slight damage to the upper edge of its open drawer, and, to the right of the keyring, a strip of ebony has fallen away. Despite this attention to detail, and to the realities of the physical world, ever subject to decay, on the lowermost box, in front of the cabinet, the artist has signed his name, as though to reference the irreality of his creation without disturbing its composition.

De Pereda's ambiguous work highlights the presence of the cabinet in the world of art, and vice versa, demonstrating certain commonalities between the two forms of practice: the concern with documenting and revealing the nature of physical objects, both natural and artificial, the arrangement of objects in space and the hidden, symbolic aspects of objects, as well as their representations of ephemerality. It also raises several questions. In particular, the painting seamlessly combines reality with illusion. The beholder is lured into the belief that he or she can identify the objects whose forms de Pereda faithfully depicts, and even feel their textures or imagine their taste, but how and to what extent do such representational strategies mirror those of the cabinet? What aspects of the world was the

artist trying to communicate, and how do these correspond to the cabinet's conceptualisation of the world?

John Donne's questioning of the seventeenth-century fascination with the painted object at the start of this chapter recalls contemporary debates on the nature of the 'still life' painting. As paintings of inanimate objects, plants and living as well as dead creatures,<sup>503</sup> scholars have often disagreed as to whether such artworks are more than the sum of what they appear to represent. Roland Barthes, for example, drew attention to the 'sheen' of still life in his 1953 essay *Le Monde-objet*, or, 'The World as Object', in which he indicated that such paintings, with their often decadent objects and multifaceted representation, painted and reflected in mirrors, liquids and vessels, were primarily concerned with the surface impressions of things, and hence, the superficial.<sup>504</sup>

In fact, here, Donne was using still life as a rhetorical device to advocate in favour of women's use of cosmetics. Interestingly, while the use of the word 'cosmetic' to describe the adornment of the body emerged during the early seventeenth century, it derives from the Greek *kosmein*, meaning 'to arrange or adorn', which in turn derives from *kosmos*, denoting 'order or adornment'. Thus if still life was *cosmetic* in nature, it pertained not just to a pleasing aesthetic arrangement, but to the ordering of a cosmos in miniature. Moreover, it was also cosmographic, as Humanist scholarship would have it, in that it attempted to

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<sup>503</sup> De Pereda's still lifes were often populated with allegorical figures presiding over accumulations of symbolic objects, as in *The Knight's Dream* (c. 1650), and may have been influenced by his prior 'history' paintings.

<sup>504</sup> See Joanna Woodall, 'Laying the Table: The Procedures of Still Life', in Angela Vanhaelen and Bronwen Wilson, *Art History*, 35.5 (2012), 976-1003 (p. 980).

document the world.<sup>505</sup> Just as the cabinet performed a cosmetic function, through the acts of assemblage, framing and containment, objects in still life paintings were carefully arranged within a defined setting, and in a manner comparable to the cabinet's. Furthermore, the still life's period of most intense popularity coincides with that of the cabinet, one of the key means by which objects, including still life paintings, were collected, displayed and interpreted during the early modern period.

This chapter investigates the relationship between the still life painting and the cabinet, by examining the still life as a potential key to unlocking some of the visual strategies by which the cabinet represented the world. In particular, it will explore the treatment of objects in the still life painting, and how this can help illuminate their appearance in the cabinet's schema. This chapter offers a definition and historiography of the still life painting before considering still life artists' use of ekphrasis, *trompe l'oeil* and illusion, the evocation of materiality and sensory engagement with objects and the construction of eidetic and introspective space through the conduit of the painting. The theoretical framework of this chapter draws upon art history and theory, as well as two theories of knowledge construction: Michel Foucault's theory of the four similitudes,<sup>506</sup> and Jacques Derrida's theory of the *parergon*.<sup>507</sup> Thus, where Chapter Three focussed upon spatial practices in art and the curiosity cabinet, this chapter examines the formal and symbolic relationships between objects in both worlds.

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<sup>505</sup> Schmidt, 'Inventing Exoticism', p. 350.

<sup>506</sup> Foucault, *The Order of Things*, pp. 19-33.

<sup>507</sup> Derrida, 'Parergon', pp. 15-147.



## Defining the ‘Still Life’: history and context

It is useful to consider what is meant by the art historical term ‘still life’, as well as the cultural, philosophical and historical contexts in which this sits. While their nature, purpose and value have undergone a significant metamorphosis, forms of still life painting have existed since antiquity. These paintings of objects were typically details embedded into larger constructs, such as mural paintings. This practice was revived during late medieval period, often in a religious context,<sup>508</sup> but by the early seventeenth century, the still life painting had become an integral feature of the artistic landscape in its own right, and was especially prevalent in Italy, the Netherlands, Germany and Spain.<sup>509</sup> These paintings not only feature images of contemporary objects and collections, both real and imaginary; they also demonstrate the complex nature of meaning-making through material culture and its display in this period. In addition, they evoke sensory engagement with objects in a manner which is comparable to contemporary accounts of the cabinet from collectors, patrons and visitors, and were often themselves commissioned or purchased for display within a cabinet.

Yet the still life painting of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries remains something of an enigma. As paintings of objects pertaining to the ‘real’ and the ‘everyday’, their ubiquity, and the apparent banality of their subject matter means they can be easily overlooked by the contemporary beholder. They have also tended to escape in-depth

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<sup>508</sup> Sterling, *Still Life Painting*, pp. 16-23.

<sup>509</sup> Lowenthal, ‘Introduction’, in *The Object as Subject*, p. 7.

scrutiny by historians and theorists of art until the latter half of the twentieth century.<sup>510</sup> Yet art historical scholarship from the 1980s onwards has indicated that there is indeed more to the still life than meets the eye. In particular, the nature of its ‘realism’ has been called into question, in that such paintings do not merely reflect reality; rather, they use objects and representations of objects to evoke a hidden world which is perceived to underpin the real.<sup>511</sup> More recently, however, this view has been contested by scholars such as Svetlana Alpers and Joanna Woodall, who offer alternatives to this symbolic reading.<sup>512</sup>

The still life is traditionally defined by its subject matter as paintings featuring ‘inanimate objects such as fruit, flowers, food and everyday items’ as their main foci.<sup>513</sup> While paintings resembling the still life existed in the ancient world, for example, the Roman *xenia* (Figure 26), a type of mural painting whose earliest surviving examples are to be found in the villas of Pompeii,<sup>514</sup> the term ‘still life’ was not used until the mid-seventeenth century. It makes its first appearance in Dutch inventories of paintings as *still-leven*, and is used to describe pictures of ‘a motionless model’.<sup>515</sup> Woodall borrows a concept from Celeste Brusati to suggest that implicit within this is the notion of ‘stilled life’, that is,

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<sup>510</sup> See Charles Sterling, *Still Life Painting from Antiquity to the Present Time* (New York: Universe, 1959), p. 4, Norman Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked: Four Essays on Still Life Painting* (London: Reaktion Books, 1990), p. 8, and Lowenthal, ‘Introduction’, p. 3.

<sup>511</sup> For a discussion of the practice of ‘disguising symbols under the cloak of real things’, see Erwin Panofsky, ‘Reality and Symbol in Early Flemish Painting: “Spiritualia sub Metaphoris Corporalium”’, in *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character*, 2 vols (Harper & Row: London and New York, 1971), I, pp. 131-148 (p. 141). See also Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, pp. 56-7. Panofsky’s iconological analysis interprets symbols as inhabiting part of a wider ‘history of cultural symptoms’ (p. 65), and not simply what the artist intended to express.

<sup>512</sup> See Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing*, and Woodall, ‘Laying the Table’, pp. 976-1003.

<sup>513</sup> The National Gallery, Glossary, ‘Still Life’, 2011.

<sup>514</sup> See Sterling, *Still Life Painting*, p. 9, and Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked*, p. 7.

<sup>515</sup> See Lowenthal, ‘Introduction’, p. 6.

living creatures depicted without movement, although certain paintings appear to contradict this.<sup>516</sup> A new vocabulary quickly developed, however, and by the end of the seventeenth century there existed numerous highly specific terms, mostly Dutch, but also French and German, to describe the many and varied sub-genres of still life painting, such as the *fruytagie* ('fruit piece'), *bancket* ('banquet')<sup>517</sup> and *pronk*, or 'display' piece, featuring only luxury objects.<sup>518</sup>



**Figure 26:**

***Still Life with Fish*, detail from a Pompeian wall painting of the first century BC, which also shows birds, a mussel and a squid. These Roman 'still lifes' derive from the earlier Greek *xenia*, which are thought to depict offerings for the dead. By Roman times, their meaning had changed, and Vitruvius (c. 80-70 BC-c. 15 BC) relates that the *xenia* came to signify 'welcoming gifts', offerings given by a good host to his or her guests. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, 8635.**

***Image removed due to copyright restrictions. Link to image online:***  
[http://cir.campania.beniculturali.it/museoarcheologiconazionale/thematic-views/image-gallery/RA86/?searchterm=still life with fish](http://cir.campania.beniculturali.it/museoarcheologiconazionale/thematic-views/image-gallery/RA86/?searchterm=still%20life%20with%20fish)

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<sup>516</sup> Woodall, 'Laying the Table', p. 983.

<sup>517</sup> Norbert Schneider, *Still Life: Still Life Painting in the Early Modern Period* (Köln: Taschen, 2009), p. 7.

<sup>518</sup> Anne Lowenthal, 'Contemplating Kalf', in *The Object as Subject*, pp. 29-39 (p. 29).

*Nature morte*, a slightly later, French term for still life painting in general, appears to equate them with the *memento mori* and the *vanitas*, of which the latter eventually became a sub-genre of still life painting in its own right as an expression of the vanity and fleeting nature of all temporal things.<sup>519</sup> There are also those paintings which are akin to still lifes in many respects, such as the Dutch ‘merry company’ of the seventeenth century, which might include symbolic groups of objects, but the ‘pure’ still life is usually considered to be one in which human presence is only suggested, never seen.<sup>520</sup> The still life still exists in contemporary art practice, although it has moved beyond the confines of painting and sculpture into other media,<sup>521</sup> but its definition appears to have changed little in more than 300 years. Tate, for example, continues to define it as the absence of life, comprising ‘anything that does not move or is dead’.<sup>522</sup>

The definitions outlined above are sparse and not particularly helpful in understanding the often complex nature of still life painting during the early modern period. The historical terms for specific genres are likewise to be approached with caution, as these rarely exist in a pure, uncomplicated state. In an early attempt at cataloguing the various types of still life, for example, art historian Ingvar Bergström distinguishes between the *vanitas* proper and related pictures such as the flower painting with a skull, which, he argues, merely expresses

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<sup>519</sup> Schneider, *Still Life*, p. 7.

<sup>520</sup> Lowenthal, ‘Introduction’, p. 7.

<sup>521</sup> For an unusual contemporary example see Dennis Severs, *18 Folgate Street: The Tale of a House in Spitalfields* (London: Vintage and Chatto and Windus, 2002).

<sup>522</sup> Tate Collection, Glossary, ‘Still life’, 2011.

‘transience’.<sup>523</sup> According to Bergström, while symbols of transience also inhabit the *vanitas*, these paintings typically contain a much more elaborate and literary symbolism which serves to deliver a clearly moralising message.

Furthermore, an early modern artist might combine a number of elements from different genres and sub genres in an idiosyncratic manner. In her discussion of Willem Kalf’s (1619-93) unusual rendering of the *vanitas* genre in his *Still Life with a Nautilus Cup* (1662), for example, Anne Lowenthal argues that while this painting contains elements of the *vanitas*, this term does not adequately describe the full significance of the work.<sup>524</sup>

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the still life was considered by many art theorists and critics to be the lowest form of painting, a perspective which has persisted in art history and theory until the late twentieth century.<sup>525</sup> It was situated well below ‘history’ paintings, which drew largely upon Biblical, historical and mythological events and narratives, usually for allegorical or didactic purposes.<sup>526</sup> Indeed, still life painting was also situated beneath portraiture and paintings of animals and landscapes, as the still life was primarily concerned with the ‘lower’ forms of life or the inanimate, in a manner which, Norbert Schneider argues, follows the late medieval interpretation of a classical system for ordering creation: the Porphyrian Tree.<sup>527</sup>

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<sup>523</sup> Ingvar Bergström, trans. by Christina Hedström and Gerald Taylor, *Dutch Still-Life Painting in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Hacker, 1983), p. 154.

<sup>524</sup> Lowenthal, ‘Contemplating Kalf’, p. 36.

<sup>525</sup> Lowenthal, ‘Introduction’, p. 3.

<sup>526</sup> Schneider, *Still Life*, p. 7.

<sup>527</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

This system, first devised by the Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyry (234- c. 305), ordered the world with ‘Man’ at its pinnacle, followed by animate and sensitive beings and lastly inanimate objects. The still life’s seeming preoccupation with the material, the quotidian and the temporal is therefore, Schneider contends, what has led to its ultimate neglect by art theory and criticism from antiquity until the mid-twentieth century. Moreover, the inanimate objects it depicted typically had the appearance of being ‘scattered around without thought’.<sup>528</sup> This view is supported by a number of art historians, including Lowenthal.

However, Lowenthal also offers a further explanation as to the notions which shaped the early modern conception of the still life, by defining the still life in opposition to the history painting:

The traditionally low theoretical status of still life reflects a value system in which the abstract, the spiritual, the infinite, and the ideal are placed above the concrete, the material, the finite and the real. A history painter [...] had to use the force of imagination to depict themes from history, myth, and scripture. In contrast, a still-life painter could simply copy objects from life.<sup>529</sup>

Behind this privileging of narrative over description, Jules David Prown observes, lay a strong association of the material world with corruption, for ‘material things are heir to all sorts of ills – they break, get dirty, smell, wear out; [whereas] abstract ideas remain pristine,

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<sup>528</sup> Schneider, *Still Life*, p. 7.

<sup>529</sup> Lowenthal, ‘Introduction’, p. 8.

free from such worldly debilities'.<sup>530</sup> Nevertheless, some doubt has been cast upon such theories by Schneider,<sup>531</sup> who questions how much this 'academic' view was taken up by painters and their patrons, especially given the popularity of the still life in this period, as well as the considerable sums collectors were prepared to pay for these artworks.<sup>532</sup>

By contrast, from the mid-twentieth century onwards, art historians have been at pains to demonstrate the dialogue between the world of things and the world of ideas in the still life painting, in particular within Panofskian iconography and the 'disguised symbolism' school of thought.<sup>533</sup> In considering the relationship between symbolism and realism in the still life, art historian and semiotician Norman Bryson offers a more thoughtful definition of the still life than simply 'objects without movement'. Instead, he suggests that it is a genre of painting whose visual representations explore 'through the most complex symbolism [...] the place of what might be called low-plane reality, as this appears within the higher discourses of culture'.<sup>534</sup>

According to Charles Sterling, the still life was originally a miniature world embedded within the world of a larger painting in late medieval, and some classical art.<sup>535</sup> Late medieval representations of St. Jerome in his study are often cited as evidence of this

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<sup>530</sup> Jules Prown cited in Lowenthal, 'Introduction', p. 8.

<sup>531</sup> Schneider, *Still Life*, p. 9.

<sup>532</sup> Schneider notes that a flower still life by the Dutch artist Ambrosius Bosschaert (1573-1621) was sold for the sum of 1,000 guilders, at a time when a good portrait painting typically sold for 60 guilders. See *Still Life*, p. 10.

<sup>533</sup> See Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked*, p. 120, John Walker and Sarah Chaplin, *Visual Culture: An Introduction* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 130, and Schneider, *Still Life*, p. 17.

<sup>534</sup> Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked*, p. 14.

<sup>535</sup> Sterling, *Still Life Painting*, p. 6.

(Figure 27).<sup>536</sup> As the most ‘learned’ saint, Jerome was a popular subject during this period, which lent itself to the depiction of arrangements of significant objects within a defined setting, and typically featured small groups of objects such as a skull and an hourglass placed close together. Sterling argues that it later occurred to artists to paint just the skull and the hourglass, thus forming an independent composition in which the symbolic content of these objects was unaltered.<sup>537</sup>

In fact, symbolic motifs such as a skull were often painted not on the canvas itself, but on the reverse side of late medieval portraits as a subtle reminder of the future state of the sitter,<sup>538</sup> as in the influential German artist Barthel Bruyn the Elder’s (1493-1555) *Portrait of a Man/ Skull in a Niche* (1533-55). By following a largely iconographical analysis, Sterling, Bergström, Schneider and others have thus indicated the diverse origins of the still life in late medieval art, from paintings and murals to manuscript illumination and marquetry. However, this apparent resemblance needs to be approached with caution, as iconographical similarity does not necessarily signify similarity of purpose in terms of how the image was intended to be perceived or engaged with by its intended audience.

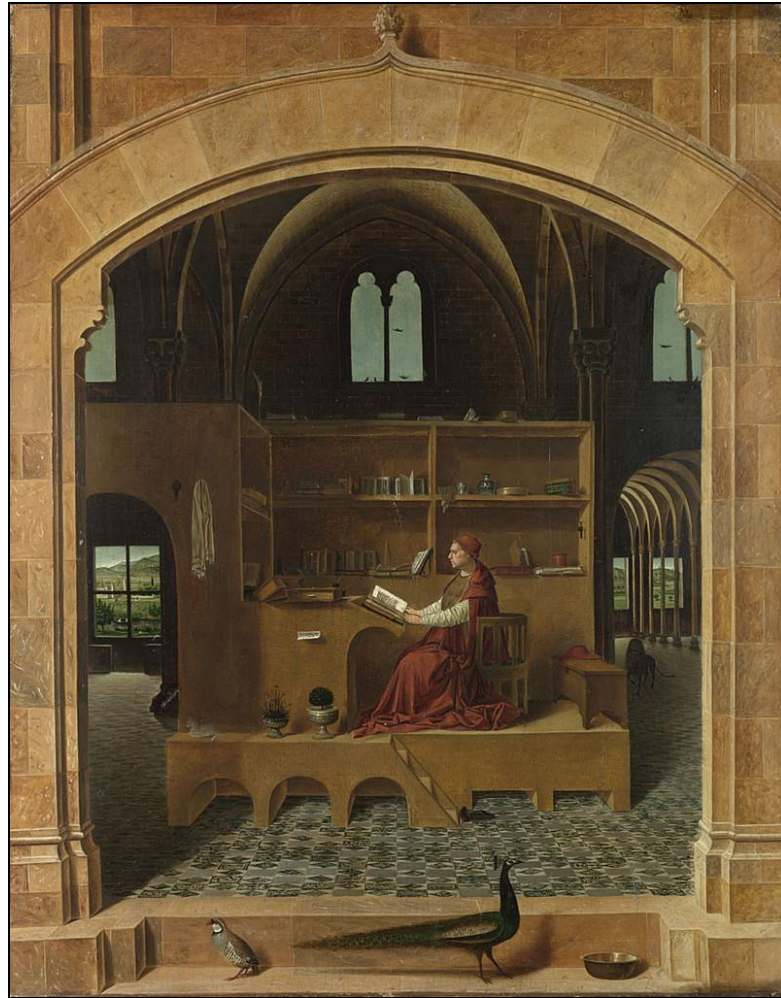
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<sup>536</sup> *Ibid.* See also Bergström, *Dutch Still-Life Painting*, pp. 188-9.

<sup>537</sup> Sterling, *Still Life Painting*, p. 6.

<sup>538</sup> Schneider, *Still Life*, p. 77.





**Figure 27:**

**Antonello da Messina (c. 1430-1479), *Saint Jerome in his Study* (c. 1475). An Italian artist, Da Messina's careful depiction of the objects in Jerome's study and the view from the windows was influenced by Netherlandish painting. Not only does it display the types of object later found in still life paintings, this was also a 'cabinet picture', a small-scale painting intended for display within a private collector's 'cabinet', a small room set aside for this purpose. By kind permission of and © The National Gallery, London, NG1418.**

## The debate on allegory versus realism

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, then, the still life was an ancient but lesser branch of Western European painting, a perspective that was little changed by the end of the seventeenth century. In his 1678 treatise on painting the Dutch artist and critic Samuel van Hoogstraten wrote that he considered still life painters to be mere ‘foot soldiers in the army of art’.<sup>539</sup> Despite the still life’s prolificacy and popularity with artists, patrons and collectors throughout the early modern period, as well as its longevity as a form of artistic expression, it was rarely considered to approach the gravitas of the so-called ‘history painting’, then considered the most intellectually rigorous genre.

By contrast, still life painting appeared to be what both Charles Sterling and Norman Bryson have called ‘rhopographic’; that is, subtle and concerned with the everyday and the ‘creaturely’, the intimate but banal acts of eating and drinking, for example, rather than the grandeur and epic scale of the history painting with its gods and heroes. Sterling suggests that this term is Greek in origin, and acquired pejorative associations in antiquity, evidenced by the use of a play on words which transformed ‘rhopography’, the painting of insignificant objects, into ‘rhypography’, the painting of the sordid, or the vulgar.<sup>540</sup>

The neglect of the still life by art history, theory and criticism continued well into the twentieth century, and even today this rich resource remains an under-theorised area of

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<sup>539</sup> Samuel van Hoogstraten cited in Lowenthal, ‘Introduction’, p. 8.

<sup>540</sup> Sterling, *Still Life Painting*, p. 11.

scholarly enquiry.<sup>541</sup> However, there are some notable exceptions. Early specialists in the field include Alphonsus Vorenkamp (1933), Julio Cavestany (1935), Ingvar Bergström (1956), Charles Sterling (1959),<sup>542</sup> author of the most ambitious survey of the still life yet attempted, which traces its history in Western art for over 2,000 years, and Michel Faré (1962). These early volumes tend to be taxonomic in nature, mapping out the vast and somewhat shadowy territory of the early modern still life. Another key scholar was Meyer Schapiro, who considered still lifes to be major works of art and published an in-depth reading of the significance of the apple in the work of the nineteenth-century artist Paul Cézanne in 1968.<sup>543</sup> Schapiro was also noteworthy for championing an interdisciplinary approach to the study of art, then a radical departure from traditional methodologies, which incorporated the social, political and material construction of artworks.

During the last three decades, the early modern still life has attracted more sustained attention from historians and theorists of art. In particular, Svetlana Alpers (1983), Norman Bryson (1990), Anne Lowenthal (1996), Norbert Schneider (2009) and Joanna Woodall (2012) have contributed to current debates, although this list is by no means exhaustive. Lowenthal has suggested that this resurgence of interest is the result of an increasing focus upon the everyday in scholarship more widely, from the historical writing of Fernand

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<sup>541</sup> Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked*, p. 8, and Lowenthal, 'Introduction', p. 3.

<sup>542</sup> Sterling, *Still Life Painting*.

<sup>543</sup> Lowenthal, 'Introduction', pp. 5-6.

Braudel (1902-1985) to the literary criticism and philosophy of Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975).<sup>544</sup>

Interest in the still life also found expression in a series of major exhibitions of early modern still life paintings during the early 1980s, particularly in Germany, which may in turn have helped reinvigorate scholarship in this arena.<sup>545</sup> While the still life is still primarily written about by historians of art, there are also signs that it is no longer considered the exclusive preserve of art history, and scholars such as Bryson and Lowenthal have sought to combine art historical analyses of the still life with those from other disciplines, including material culture, visual culture, social history, philosophy and phenomenology.

One of the most contentious debates in the interpretation of still life paintings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries concerns the nature of their realism. Their subject matter – frequently the familiar objects of daily life patrons would recognise from their own households – their depth and seeming tactility,<sup>546</sup> together with the precise, almost scientific attention to detail which many still lifes exhibit<sup>547</sup> all seem to point to a frank description of the world,<sup>548</sup> without deviation or embellishment; in other words, a perfect

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<sup>544</sup> Lowenthal, 'Introduction', pp. 8-9.

<sup>545</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>546</sup> Alice Berghof, "'Nearest the tangible earth": Rembrandt, Samuel van Hoogstraten, George Berkeley, and the Optics of Touch', in John Hendrix and Charles Carman, eds., *Renaissance Theories of Vision* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 187–211 (p. 200).

<sup>547</sup> Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked*, p. 106.

<sup>548</sup> Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing*, p. xviii.

mirror of reality. Yet subjected to an iconographical analysis, the still life becomes something quite different: an allegory.

Iconography, literally ‘image writing’, has its roots in the early modern period in the work of critics and chroniclers of painting such as Giorgio Vasari, but its contemporary incarnation was developed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in response to formalism which focussed upon painterly form, style and technique.<sup>549</sup> The pioneer of this approach, Erwin Panofsky, was less concerned with examining form, and the ‘realism’ of its depiction, than in discerning the latent meaning of images.<sup>550</sup>

Represented objects therefore became metonyms in Panofskian iconographical analysis, keys to a hidden world of symbols, and this has since become one of the most popular methods of interpreting the still life painting. Thus, a Panofskian reading of a fruit still life might transform its representation of grapes, pears and apples into allusions to the blood of Christ, the sweetness of his incarnation and Christ’s love for the Church.<sup>551</sup> Iconography draws heavily upon supporting textual evidence to support its claims – faced with an unfamiliar image, Panofsky would search for the text or the programme the artist had drawn upon.<sup>552</sup> A form of iconography is also employed to a greater or lesser extent by Sterling, Bergström, Bryson, Lowenthal and Schneider, but it is rarely the sole method of interpretation used. Panofsky’s second contribution to art historical analysis was iconology,

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<sup>549</sup> Walker and Chaplin, *Visual Culture*, p. 130.

<sup>550</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>551</sup> See Schneider, *Still Life*, p. 17.

<sup>552</sup> Walker and Chaplin, *Visual Culture*, p. 131.

which seeks to situate iconographical findings within a wider context, in which they are perceived to be symptomatic of an ideology particular to an era or culture.

The iconographical school of thought has been heavily criticized by a number of art historians, most notably Svetlana Alpers,<sup>553</sup> who has written extensively on Dutch art of the seventeenth century, and is particularly suspicious of allegorical interpretations of the still life. She argues that these paintings ‘do not disguise meaning or hide it beneath the surface but rather show that meaning by its very nature is lodged in what the eye can take in – however deceptive that might be’.<sup>554</sup>

Alpers further contends that historians of Dutch art have become unwittingly subject to what she calls ‘the Italian bias’, in that through their efforts to demonstrate that Dutch paintings are worthy of being considered alongside Italian art of the same period, they have essentially approached them as if they were an Italian *istoria*, a narrative painting, which has caused their interpretation to ‘rework northern art in the image of the south’.<sup>555</sup> For Alpers, the visual experience of the Dutch painting in the seventeenth century has been contaminated by a contemporary emphasis on the verbal connotations of the image.<sup>556</sup> Instead, she argues, Dutch art needs to be understood as the art of *describing* the world, situated within the wider context of Dutch visual culture, which operated as the primary means by which Dutch society ‘represented itself to itself’.<sup>557</sup> This is one area in which

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<sup>553</sup> Alpers, *The Art of Describing*, p. xxiii.

<sup>554</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxiv.

<sup>555</sup> Alpers, *The Art of Describing*, p. xxiv.

<sup>556</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xix.

<sup>557</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxv.

Alpers appears to share ground with Panofsky, as her approach recalls Panofsky's iconological agenda.

Alternative views to these are taken by a number of art historians, some of whom, such as Norman Bryson, have also questioned the parameters and validity of the debate on realism and allegory. While semiotics, the study of 'the life of all signs within society',<sup>558</sup> can provide a focussed (if somewhat inflexible) reading of art when applied in the extreme, Bryson applies it sparingly, grounding his interpretation of the still life in material cultural theory. For Bryson, the still life painting is both a contrivance of 'signs in semantic space' whose meaning derives from 'the collaboration between signs (visual or verbal) and interpreters',<sup>559</sup> as well as the product of 'the culture of the table', that is, the culture of material artefacts, themselves historical, social and ideological constructs.<sup>560</sup>

For Bryson, then, it is not a question of whether the still life employs allegory or not, but rather the nature of the relationship between the painting's naturalism and its symbolic properties. In a similar vein, Schneider considers the relationship between realism and illusionism in the still life, and concludes that early modern naturalism conveyed through illusionism in painting reflects the late medieval philosophy of nominalism, in which the world is viewed as a collection of objects whose essence we can never grasp, only their external appearance.<sup>561</sup> Allied to this is Alice Berghof's suggestion that seventeenth-

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<sup>558</sup> Walker and Chaplin, *Visual Culture*, p. 137.

<sup>559</sup> Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked*, p. 10.

<sup>560</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>561</sup> Schneider, *Still Life*, p. 16.

century artists were interested in representation and its limits, explored through different (and often new) media, such as miniatures, models and the *camera obscura*.<sup>562</sup>

Norbert Schneider, Norman Bryson and Ingvar Bergström all reference the cabinet in their analyses of early modern still life painting; indeed Schneider devotes an entire chapter to still life paintings of ‘museums’ and ‘wonder chambers’. Furthermore, Schneider considers still lifes to be valuable ‘documents of the history of civilization and mentalities’,<sup>563</sup> and uses the so-called ‘paintings of paintings’ genre as evidence that paintings *in* cabinets

often had the function of replacing the reality depicted in them. [...] It was one of the late effects of a magical view of art, verging on illusionism, in which pictures were seen as substitutes for reality.<sup>564</sup>

The cabinet first appears in art historical discourse during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and it is clear that art historians have traditionally understood the cabinet and the still life painting as inhabiting the same world, and as products and expressions of the same ideas. Drawing upon Julius von Schlosser’s analysis of curiosity cabinets in 1908, Bergström links the cabinet with both natural philosophy and connoisseurship, particularly in terms of an ‘interest in rare, beautiful and expensive things which found its expression in [...] [the cabinet, and] also became important for still life painting’.<sup>565</sup> For Bergström, there is no question that each object in a still life painting was

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<sup>562</sup> Berghof, ““Nearest the tangible earth””, p. 192.

<sup>563</sup> Schneider, *Still Life*, p. 18.

<sup>564</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 158-9.

<sup>565</sup> Bergström, *Dutch Still-Life Painting*, p. 41.



carefully selected and juxtaposed with its surroundings. Despite variations in style and composition, Bergström argues that

the selection of content [...] followed certain definite rules and the basic types are rather strictly delineated. For this reason we very seldom see a still life composed of objects chosen at random.<sup>566</sup>

In a similar manner, despite their idiosyncrasies, cabinets of curiosity may also be interpreted as aspiring to certain shared ideals and governing principles, as Chapter Two illustrates.

## **Interpreting the Still Life**

Recent research on the early modern still life painting has led many scholars to ask whether this genre presents a ‘special case’, in particular regarding whether methodologies from other art historical genres can be usefully applied to the still life, or whether an entirely new methodology is needed.<sup>567</sup> Bryson has suggested that this problem arises because the still life as ‘the genre at the furthest remove from narrative’ is therefore the most difficult for art theory and criticism to penetrate.<sup>568</sup> Bryson further contends that the perceived lack of an appropriate methodology for tackling the still life is the result of the contemporary understanding of the uses of art criticism, as opposed to history or theory. Criticism, Bryson

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<sup>566</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3. The ‘basic types’ of still life to which Bergström refers are the flower piece, fruit piece, breakfast piece, *Vanitas*, fish piece, banquet piece and the game piece.

<sup>567</sup> Lowenthal, ‘Introduction’, p. 3

<sup>568</sup> Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked*, p. 9.

contends, is popularly conceived of as ‘what happens to contemporary art; it is not part of art history, but, instead, of journalism’.<sup>569</sup>

Nevertheless, the use of combined methodologies in studies of still life paintings is increasingly common. Lowenthal, for instance, employs visual and iconographical analyses with social history in her discussion of Willem Kalf’s *Still Life with a Nautilus Cup* (1662). As well as asking contextual questions of artworks such as the origin, manufacture and acquisition of the objects represented in still lifes, she also considers their private meaning for the collector, as well as their wider cultural significance, and the nature of the relationship between the object and the artistic technique used to portray it.<sup>570</sup> Lowenthal also considers the still life painting from a material cultural perspective, arguing that that these paintings are not only a material cultural artefacts in and of themselves, but the objects they depict – ‘represented’ artefacts – can also be considered as the objects of material culture.<sup>571</sup>

A scholar such as Bryson might take issue with this approach, however, in that it is still too heavily reliant on an iconography of the familiar image to sustain credence on its own. Bryson observes that it is not enough to ‘read’ a painting like an equation as even a familiar symbol is likely to hold many meanings, some of which may even be contradictory.

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<sup>569</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>570</sup> Lowenthal, ‘Introduction’, pp. 4-5.

<sup>571</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

Instead, he suggests the approach should be thus: that '[...] x may stand for – but cannot otherwise relate to – y [...]'.<sup>572</sup>

The ambiguity of many early modern images is not a purely art historical problem – it was also apparent to the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century beholder. For example, Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti (1522-1597), Archbishop of Bologna, in his *Discourse on Images, Sacred and Profane* of 1582 complained that

everyday one sees [...] especially in churches, pictures so obscure and ambiguous that while they should, by illuminating the intellect, encourage devotion and touch the heart, their obscurity confounds the mind, distracting it in a thousand ways, and keeping it occupied in trying to decide which figure is what.<sup>573</sup>

Indeed, a number of art historians have identified a 'crisis' of the symbol during the Renaissance in particular, as the artistic language it employed was simultaneously based upon yet breaking free of the conventions of the late medieval period.<sup>574</sup>

Yet scholars are rarely 'wedded' to a single approach to art, and Panofsky was well aware of the methodological issues inherent in understanding the symbolic content of early modern paintings. Writing of early Flemish painting, Panofsky noted that

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<sup>572</sup> Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked*, pp. 120-1.

<sup>573</sup> Paleotti cited in A. Sutherland Harris, *Seventeenth-Century Art and Architecture* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2005 [1582]), p. 3.

<sup>574</sup> André Winandy, 'Introduction: Image and Symbol in the Renaissance', in *Yale French Studies*, 47 (1973), p. 3.

The more the painters rejoiced in the discovery and reproduction of the visible world, the more intensely did they feel the need to saturate all of its elements with meaning. Conversely, the harder they strove to express new subtleties and complexities of thought and imagination, the more eagerly did they explore new areas of reality.<sup>575</sup>

The result, Panofsky argues, was a tangled world in which not only did new symbolism combine with old, and familiar with unfamiliar, but all represented objects were conceived as latent carriers of symbolic meaning. Thus, ‘all meaning has assumed the shape of reality; or, to put it another way, all reality is saturated with meaning’.<sup>576</sup>

While it does not employ a semiotic approach, this chapter engages with the idea, prevalent in semiotic readings of early modern paintings, that the beholder is an active participant in creating meaning, and so, as a result, that meaning is polysemic by nature. According to Bryson, the act of ‘reading’ an image

is not something ‘extra’, an optional supplement to an image that is already complete and self-sufficient. It is as fundamental an element as the paint, and there is no viewer who looks at a painting who is not already engaged in interpreting it [...]<sup>577</sup>

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<sup>575</sup> Panofsky, ‘Reality and Symbol’, p. 142.

<sup>576</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>577</sup> Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked*, p. 10.

The following sections present four different perspectives on the early modern still life painting. I examine each as a practice of looking connected to the representational strategies of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century curiosity cabinet.

*Organising principles: ekphrasis*

In Willem Kalf's (1619-1693) *Still Life with a Nautilus Cup* (1662) (Figure 28), a richly-dressed table is laden with expensive objects, fruit and wine. A shaft of light from the left hand side illuminates the contours of these objects of nature and artifice: glass and gold, silver and porcelain, fruits, nuts and shells. The eye is inexorably drawn to the objects in the light – the rest of the painting is in darkness. Only the table corner is visible, so the beholder may suppose that more objects lurk at the edges of the pictorial space. These objects are not only opulent, but exotic. They hail from all over the world – the rug from Persia, the porcelain bowl from China and the nautilus shell from the Pacific or Indian Ocean.<sup>578</sup>

Yet these are represented objects, and together, they form an aesthetic *capriccio* as from the silver platter to the wine decanter to the nautilus cup which dominates the composition, they are depicted as more elaborate than would or could be fashioned in reality.<sup>579</sup> This is the Dutch *pronk* still life, the still life of luxury and display. Lowenthal draws the reader's attention to the centrepiece, the elaborately gilded nautilus cup – a typical 'cabinet' object,

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<sup>578</sup> Lowenthal, 'Contemplating Kalf', pp. 30-1.

<sup>579</sup> Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked*, p. 124.

comparable to the Augsburg Art Cabinet's Seychelles nut ewer – fashioned as a finned sea-monster whose yawning mouth seems about to swallow a fleeing human figure.



**Figure 28:**

**Willem Kalf's *Still Life with a Nautilus Cup* (1662), oil on canvas. By kind permission and © Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, 203 (1962.10).**

The obvious iconographical reference, Lowenthal argues, is Jonah and the Whale, but its full significance can only be understood in relation to the objects which surround it.

Lowenthal notes that the outstretched arms of the figure intersect precisely with the level of

the red wine in the decanter to the rear of the composition. The wine may be symbolic of Christ's passion, and therefore suggestive of Jonah's repentance and wish for redemption.<sup>580</sup> Both the wine and the shell seem to glow with an inner light, suggestive, Lowenthal adds, of spiritual purity.<sup>581</sup> The porcelain bowl is decorated in high relief with figures of the eight Taoist Immortals, symbols of long life and immortality amidst the heaped temporal riches.

The irony of the artist's harnessing of these rich, decadent objects as a partial *vanitas* while masquerading as a *pronk* still life is not lost on Lowenthal. Her approach is perhaps best summed up by her interpretation of the nautilus cup. Despite its conversion into an opulent receptacle for wine, Lowenthal notes that it can hold only a modest amount in spite of its size: the walls of its many inner chambers preclude it. This detail, Lowenthal argues, serves as an admonition to temperance.

Lowenthal's reading of Kalf's still life is in essence a Foucauldian one, for she contends that the painting is composed of deliberately juxtaposed opposite meanings, whose significance is dependent on reading the composition as a whole. Thus, the image reveals binaries of

dark and bright, open and closed, high and low, active and reposed [...] these formal contrasts have thematic counterparts in the sweet and bitter, pagan and Christian, domestic and foreign, manmade and natural. Both the symbolic discourse

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<sup>580</sup> Lowenthal, 'Contemplating Kalf', p. 33.

<sup>581</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

and the more immediately perceptible visual one turn on the theme of polarities and proffered choices.<sup>582</sup>

In *The Order of Things* Foucault contends that there were four key variants of similitude in operation during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries – *convenientia*, *aemulatio*, *analogy* and *sympathy*.<sup>583</sup> The first of these, *convenientia*, denotes the proximity, juxtaposition or overlapping of things in physical space ‘So that in this hinge between two things a resemblance appears’,<sup>584</sup> in this case the near-touching figures of ‘Jonah’ and the wine, a connection which, according to Lowenthal’s reading, symbolically strengthens Jonah’s association with redemption and salvation. There is, according to Foucault, a syntactic ‘entanglement’ here which is mirrored in the natural world, where the sea meets the earth, for example, or the earth the sky. Things accrue meaning through their communication with and adjustment to each other. This meaning can be obscure, however, as objects connected in this way may not appear to have any connection or similitude when considered in isolation. However, *convenientia*, like the first three similitudes, ultimately derives its meaning from the play of sympathy with antipathy.<sup>585</sup>

Foucault argues that resemblance played a seminal role in the construction of knowledge during the sixteenth century, for, he writes,

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<sup>582</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>583</sup> *Aemulatio* represents the perceived resemblance between far distant objects, such as the cabinet as a map of the cosmos, *analogy* corresponds to invisible resemblances such as the notion of the cosmos as nested boxes, whereas *sympathy* is more complex, and relates to the perceived identity of things and their myriad connections, beyond their physical likenesses. See Foucault, *The Order of Things*, pp. 19-28.

<sup>584</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>585</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.



it was resemblance that largely guided exegesis and the interpretation of texts; it was resemblance that organized the play of symbols, made possible knowledge of things visible and invisible, and controlled the art of representing them. The universe was folded in upon itself: the earth echoing the sky, faces seeing themselves reflected in the stars, and plants holding within their stems the secrets that were of use to man. Painting imitated space. And representation –whether in the service of pleasure or of knowledge – was posited as a form of repetition: the theatre of life, or the mirror of nature [...] <sup>586</sup>

Another illustration of Foucault’s theory, and a strikingly idiosyncratic variant on the still life are the composite paintings of the Milanese artist Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1526-1593) in which objects of a particular type – fruit, flowers, vegetables, even books – are painted so that collectively they form the likeness of a human figure, thus constituting a ‘double image’ as in *Vertumnus* (1591) (Figure 29). In this painting, a bust portrait of the anthropomorphic Roman god of change and the seasons is imagined as a bearded man composed of fruit, vegetables and flowers.<sup>587</sup> Here, each individual object is related to the larger picture of which it forms a part, yet, as Schneider observes, in such paintings ‘The individual elements as such do not have any mimetic properties; they only receive them when they co-occur with others’.<sup>588</sup>

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<sup>586</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>587</sup> Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Arcimboldo: Visual Jokes, Natural History and Still-Life Painting* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), p. 6.

<sup>588</sup> Schneider, *Still Life*, p. 131.



**Figure 29:**

**Giuseppe Arcimboldo's *Vertumnus* (1591), oil on panel. Skokloster Castle, Sweden, 11615.**

Kalf's still life and Arcimboldo's composite portrait are both examples of the early modern practice of commonplacing outlined in Chapters Two and Three; however, they also demonstrate the rhetorical strategy of *ekphrasis*. Deriving from the ancient Greek word for 'description', ekphrasis existed largely as a rhetorical device in the ancient world, and

referred to the practice of describing events and objects in vivid detail,<sup>589</sup> so as to rival their physical reality. An early example is Homer's description of the shield of Achilles in the *Illiad*.<sup>590</sup> Quiccheberg's *Inscriptiones* arguably constitutes a sixteenth-century version, as it uses words to create a mental image of an 'impossible' collection, and art history itself has been conceived as 'an extended argument built on ekphrasis'.<sup>591</sup> Yet while the classical concept of ekphrasis would have been known to the sixteenth and seventeenth-century artist and collector, it was modified so that it also described a compositional and display strategy in which the meaning of one work of art was enhanced by its physical juxtaposition with another artwork in a different medium, such as painting combined with poetry or sculpture.<sup>592</sup>

An example of ekphrasis in action is furnished by Arcimboldo's contemporary Gregorio Comanini, who composed an ekphrastic poem on the subject of *Vertumnus*. Arcimboldo's painting is often interpreted as an allegorical representation of Emperor Rudolph II,<sup>593</sup> and so, in fact, constitutes an example of triple representation. Comanini's poem draws the reader-beholder's attention to the various layers of representation at work in Arcimboldo's image, and underscores the nature of the relationships between them. Assuming the voice of Vertumnus himself, Comanini instructs the beholder of the painting to observe how

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<sup>589</sup> See James A. W. Heffernan, 'Ekphrasis and Representation', in *New Literary History*, 22.2 (1991), 'Probing: Art, Criticism, Genre', pp. 297-316 (p. 312).

<sup>590</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 297.

<sup>591</sup> Jaś Elsner, 'Art History as Ekphrasis', in *Art History*, 33.1 (2010), 10-27 (p. 11).

<sup>592</sup> Ernst Gombrich, *Symbolic Images: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance* (London and New York: Phaidon, 1972), p. 53.

<sup>593</sup> K.C. Elhard, 'Reframing Arcimboldo's 'Librarian'', in *Library History*, 22.3 (2006), 181-199 (p. 193).

I vary from myself,  
And thus, so varied, I am  
One only, and from various things  
With my varied countenance  
I portray resemblances.

[...] for on the outside  
I seem a monster, and on the inside  
I hide a kingly image and  
A heavenly resemblance.  
Now tell me, if it pleases you  
To see what I hide  
Now that I lift the veil.<sup>594</sup>

Comanini thus exhorts the beholder to see beyond the individual objects of which the image is composed, but then to see past this image to a disguised resemblance or sympathy in which objects which bear no resemblance to a human figure nevertheless convey both the likeness of a mythical figure and a specific person. As such, they become symbols of fertility and plenty, harnessed as a flattering commentary on the Emperor's rule.

In a world where resemblance governed knowledge and meaning, and took the form of repetition, echo and reflection, dense displays of heterogeneous objects in the cabinet were informed by rhetorical strategies of identifying the interconnectedness of things and

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<sup>594</sup> Comanini cited in Elhard, 'Arcimboldo's 'Librarian'', p. 193.

creating new constellations of meaning. The still life's ekphrasis, like the cabinet's, was at once visual and symbolic, in which the beholder was expected to navigate his or her own course around different types of objects and their perceived connections. As such, a still life painting such as Kalf's may be conceived as a set of instructions in a particular practice of looking which was also pertinent to the cabinet's selection and display of objects.

### *Trompe l'oeil and illusion*

Illusionism of one kind or another has always been integral to the still life painting, and the so-called *trompe l'oeil*, paintings to deceive the eye, in particular. While Sterling and Bryson point to some interesting antecedents in the *xenia*,<sup>595</sup> Lowenthal and Schneider have noted that the tradition of painting 'everyday' things was first revived in Italy during the fourteenth century, and informed Italian and Northern manuscript illustration, marquetry, frescoes and panel paintings.<sup>596</sup> Schneider suggests that like their classical counterparts, many of these late medieval 'still lifes' were illusionistic in character. Some of the earliest examples of *trompe l'oeil* devices are found in fresco paintings within ecclesiastical settings, often in the form of a niche or cupboard in which painted liturgical objects appear, or in the form of a *coretto*, the painted corner of a chapel.

The Florentine painter and architect Giotto di Bondone (c. 1267-1337) painted a striking *coretto* on the wall of a triumphal arch in the Cappella degli Scrovegni, Padua, in 1305, featuring a pointed arch leading the eye into a painted rib-vaulted space in which a

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<sup>595</sup> Sterling, *Still Life Painting*, p. 12, and Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked*, pp. 16-59.

<sup>596</sup> Lowenthal, 'Introduction', p. 7, and Schneider, *Still Life*, p. 10.

candelabrum is suspended before a slender Gothic window (Figure 30). The effect of this fresco is that it ‘appears to dissolve the wall’, breaking down the space between the painted and material worlds.<sup>597</sup> This late medieval preoccupation with other space, hidden space, intangible space and most importantly, imagined space is a continuous thread which was to inform and shape the later cabinet.



**Figure 30:**

**Detail of a *coretto* by Giotto di Bondone in the Cappella degli Scrovegni, Padua, 1305.**

*Image removed due to copyright restrictions.*

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<sup>597</sup> Schneider, *Still Life*, p. 10.

However, Sterling argues that another aspect of illusionism arose during the early medieval era, particularly in early Christian and later Byzantine art, which differed markedly from that of the antique 'still life' and is likely to have informed early modern painting. Realism, he argues, gave way to allusion in religious art, and so while paintings of objects remained iconographically similar to their classical counterparts, and drew upon classical traditions such as the author portrait with attributes, these forms were 'merely schematized; objects, fruit and flowers are deprived of their outward blandishments and take on the purity of ideograms'.<sup>598</sup>

Certainly, for all their apparent realism, the later still life painting was not always painted 'from the life': objects might be copied from other visual depictions or made up entirely. Furthermore, the 'staging' of objects is particularly evident in the still life painting, in which the objects it depicts had been carefully arranged, and were often physically held in place by an elaborate series of props, invisible to the beholder. The artist did not paint these hidden objects, and so they ceased to exist in the world of the painting.<sup>599</sup> Similarly, mirrors, camera obscuras and other equipment might be utilised by the artist in order to create a particular effect and even real objects might be re-imagined or idealised. Willem Kalf, who was famous for his depictions of luxury objects more fantastic than was possible in reality, often painted objects based on those he had seen in engravings, so at times both the composition of the artwork and the objects it contained were essentially imaginary.

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<sup>598</sup> Sterling, *Still Life Painting*, p. 15.

<sup>599</sup> Lowenthal, 'Contemplating Kalf', p. 32.

Thus, ‘The illusion was itself an illusion, a product of the mind’.<sup>600</sup> This observation raises important questions about what Bryson has called ‘the unstable ontology of the objects within the logic of the paintings’.<sup>601</sup> Bryson sees Kalf’s paintings not just as expressions of painterly virtuosity, but of ‘the dream of wealth’ they represent – an unattainable illusion. For Bryson, ‘The ontological instability which his technique introduces has the effect of rendering substantiality uncertain, and this opens the doors of fantasy’.<sup>602</sup>

The Dutch flower painting of the seventeenth century represents a highly sophisticated rendering of the abstract in material form, in which vision alone cannot be trusted. Despite the seeming ‘realism’ of these paintings, and their accurate depictions of rare botanical specimens, they in fact constitute a striking illusion. A good example is *Bouquet in a Niche* (Figure 31) by one of the earliest and most well-known painters of this genre of still life, Ambrosius Bosschaert (1573-1621).<sup>603</sup> Painted in c. 1620, Bosschaert’s piece depicts a large bouquet of flowers in a vase placed on a window ledge. The painting is framed by the rounded arched niche in which the vase stands, which looks out upon an undulating landscape in which two buildings are visible in the near and far distance. The flowers have attracted a variety of insect life, and there are two shells lying side by side next to the vase. On closer inspection, however, it is possible to discern that all is not what it appears. The

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<sup>600</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>601</sup> Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked*, p. 127.

<sup>602</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>603</sup> This painting is now the subject of a contemporary work of art by artistic duo Rob and Nick Carter, entitled *Transforming Still Life Painting* (2012) which renders Bosschaert’s painting digitally via a framed image, in fact a looped film, in which the details of the image slowly change. The light fades and darkens in the background, a snail slowly slides out of sight, beyond the window ledge, and insects flit among the flowers.



flowers depicted – including dahlias from Mexico, fritillaries from Persia and tulips from Turkey – do not bloom at the same time of year, yet all are depicted in their most ‘perfect’ stage of development. All the flowers are also of the cultivated variety – wild flowers do not appear in Dutch paintings.<sup>604</sup> There is therefore a severance at work here, from nature, and from time itself. It is also possible to question whether so many flowers could possibly fit into a single vase, although this is modest compared with Jan Brueghel the Elder’s vertiginous *Bouquet* (1606).<sup>605</sup> Bryson interprets the painting as an expression of both painterly and horticultural virtuosity, in which what appears natural is in fact unnatural and staged.<sup>606</sup>

However, this painting also appeals to the monumental in art. According to Bryson, these images also reflect the early modern desire to record the diversity of creation in all its glory:

Dutch flower painting takes its place in the same theoretical space which also produced the *Kunst – und Wunderkammern*, the first museums, those cabinets of natural curiosities whose function was to produce knowledge by arraying objects in a taxonomic or diagrammatic space designed to reveal variation against the background of underlying structure and type.<sup>607</sup>

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<sup>604</sup> Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked*, p. 104.

<sup>605</sup> Wolfgang Stechow, ‘Ambrosius Bosschaert: Still Life’, in *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, 53.3 (1966), p. 65, and Schneider, *Still Life*, p. 134.

<sup>606</sup> Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked*, p. 105.

<sup>607</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.



**Figure 31:**

**Ambrosius Bosschaert, *Bouquet in a Niche* (c. 1620), oil on panel. By kind permission of and © Mauritshuis, The Hague, 679.**

Bryson's claims that the cabinet sought to reveal difference rather than similitude is truer of the seventeenth century than it is of the sixteenth, and his argument that theirs was a taxonomic purpose is debatable, as is his likening them to forerunners of the museum. As Long has argued, 'modern disciplinary categories are at least in part anachronistic. They tend to separate these works from one another in ways that are inappropriate for the

sixteenth century, obscuring their common culture'.<sup>608</sup> Nevertheless, Bryson's analogy between Dutch flower paintings and cabinets of natural curiosities is interesting, and worth pursuing. Flower paintings and other visual representations of flowers did appear in cabinets, 'as an optical substitute for the real blossom which was so transient'.<sup>609</sup> The collector Ulisse Aldrovandi, writing in 1595, recorded that

Today in my microcosm, you can see more than 18,000 different things, among which 7000 in fifteen volumes, dried and pasted, 3000 of which I had painted as if alive [...] I have had paintings made of a further 5000 natural objects – such as plants, various sorts of animals, and stones – some of which have been made into woodcuts.<sup>610</sup>

Aldrovandi also draws attention to the microcosmic and macrocosmic scale of the image, reflecting the cabinet's use of space, for, as Bryson notes, 'The space is centripetal: the flowers fly to this space from many lands. And it is distilled: all the greater spaces are concentrated in this one, sovereign space'.<sup>611</sup> This resembles the spatial practices of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century cabinet, which was designed to be a microcosm of reality, although there was often also a sense of macrocosmic stretching out towards a greater, if imaginary space. This can sometimes be inferred from the *trompe l'oeil* paintings which habitually decorated Italian *scrittoio*, depicting illusionistic windows opening out into

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<sup>608</sup> Long, 'Objects of Art', p. 65.

<sup>609</sup> Schneider, *Still Life*, p. 138.

<sup>610</sup> Ulisse Aldrovandi cited in Claudia Swan, 'From Blowfish to Flower Still Life Paintings: Classification and its Images, circa 1600', in Smith and Findlen, eds., *Merchants and Marvels*, p. 110.

<sup>611</sup> Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked*, p. 105.

galleries or landscapes, such as those belonging to Federico da Montefeltro in his palaces at Urbino and Gubbio.

Bosschaert's painting also functions as a *trompe l'oeil*, which Sterling distinguishes from the concept of the painting as a 'window on nature' which, he argues, merely employs the illusions of depth and relief. The true *trompe l'oeil*, he argues, goes further in that it reaches out into its surroundings, in both a Foucauldian and a Derridean sense, and interacts with them until the resulting entanglement means it is not clear where the painting ends and reality begins:

*A trompe l'oeil is a painting which sets out to make us forget the fact that it is a painting, which aspires to be a fragment of reality. To achieve this end, it suggests not only spatial recession but also the space in front of the picture surface; it sets up a continuity between the space figured in the painting and the real space in which the spectator stands – and does so by making the relief of the body represented (an object, a hand etc.) project out aggressively beyond the frame, towards us [...]*

Lastly, it employs a smoothly blended, *invisible execution*.<sup>612</sup>

Similarly, the philosopher and cultural theorist Jean Baudrillard contends that the *trompe-l'oeil* operates 'by taking away a dimension from real objects, highlight[ing] their presence and their magic through the simple unreality of their minimal exactness. *Trompe-l'oeil* is the ecstasy of the real object in its immanent form'.<sup>613</sup> This, of course, has implications for Schneider's theory of the painted image as surrogate object in the cabinet. Frozen in time,

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<sup>612</sup> Sterling, *Still Life Painting*, p. 128.

<sup>613</sup> Jean Baudrillard cited in Nicholas Zurbrugg, ed., *Art and Artefact* (London: SAGE, 1997), p. 9.

Bosschaert's blooms are captured in a way that may have made them preferable to the material object, by representing them in their most perfect form, and by drawing them further into the spaces of representation in the form of the print or the catalogue.

The cabinet too, quite apart from frequently featuring independent *trompe l'oeil* devices in its decorative schema as well as its collection, also drew upon this tradition in its conception. The artistic *trompe l'oeil* invites us to question the nature of perception itself, whereas the cabinet operates a grander illusion. This physical space and the objects it contained enabled the collector to commune with other spaces, exotic and far-flung, mysterious places, occult spaces, spaces of the mind as well as of the body, and to create order out of seeming chaos in an act which must have seemed akin to the Biblical act of the creation. Collectors were quite literally building a world, or an interpretation of a world. Yet where the *trompe l'oeil* appropriated reality to make its illusion the more complete, the cabinet appropriated fantasy and theatre as tools for mapping and making sense of the stuff of material reality.

### *Materiality and sensory engagement*

The human senses are also subject to Foucauldian *convenientia*, in that they are increasingly viewed as entangled by nature.<sup>614</sup> As a result, the separating and privileging of certain senses above others may be viewed as false or stilted by certain approaches. However, ocularcentricity continues to permeate many disciplines, and this is particularly

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<sup>614</sup> Howes, 'Scent, Sound and Synaesthesia', pp. 161-172.

true of art historical enquiry.<sup>615</sup> Nevertheless, the pre-eminence of the visual in interpreting cultural meaning more generally has been challenged by anthropological readings such as Constance Classen's,<sup>616</sup> by material cultural theorists and historians of the senses such as David Howes, and by other, more embodied, phenomenological approaches.<sup>617</sup> At first these approaches may appear particularly unsuited to the two-dimensional surface of a painting, even such an illusionistic genre of painting as the still life. Yet many historians of art have also experimented with different approaches to the visual, especially concerning the 'materiality of the painted surface' during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including Heinrich Wölfflin, Barbara Stafford, Donald Posner, Philip Sohm and Alice Berghof.<sup>618</sup>

Schneider suggests that one of the reasons the still life retained its popularity with artists and collectors throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was the new empiricism its methods and treatment of its subject matter appeared to reflect. Thus, 'With growing sensualism in the theory of knowledge, still lifes became more and more a medium that reflected the painter's artistic perception and process of realization'.<sup>619</sup> The cabinet was very much a product of the same intellectual milieu. For example, the motto of the seventeenth-century Royal Society, which retained a 'repository' of objects for study

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<sup>615</sup> Fiona Candlin, 'Museums, Modernity and the Class Politics of Touching Objects', in Helen Chatterjee, ed., *Touch in Museums: Policy and Practice in Object Handling* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2008), pp. 9-20 (pp. 9-10).

<sup>616</sup> Constance Classen, 'Museum Manners: The Sensory Life of the Early Museum', in *Journal of Social History*, 40.4 (2007), 895-914.

<sup>617</sup> Christopher Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments* (Oxford: Berg, 1994).

<sup>618</sup> Berghof, "Nearest the tangible earth", p. 189.

<sup>619</sup> Schneider, *Still Life*, p. 201.

purposes, was *Nullius in verba*, or ‘Take nobody’s word for it’.<sup>620</sup> Similarly, while she acknowledges the difficulty of reconstructing the sensory customs of the past, Constance Classen has argued that ‘Part of the attraction of museums and of the cabinets of curiosities which preceded them [...] seemed to be their ability to offer visitors an intimate physical encounter with rare and curious objects’, in a manner which transcended the visual.<sup>621</sup> Although her focus is slightly later, examining the eighteenth-century museum, Fiona Candlin also supports this view, and notes that ‘There is some considerable evidence that visitors to the first public museums touched the collections’.<sup>622</sup>

The appearance of three-dimensionality in early modern paintings was often achieved through the use of techniques such as perspective and chiaroscuro to create an illusion of depth, or by artworks which made use of applied ornament, or which otherwise embedded the artwork within a three-dimensional structure such as a triptych, ‘peep’ box or cupboard. Yet the paint itself is typically perceived to be ‘flat’. Indeed, the early modern still life painting has sometimes been perceived to be particularly two dimensional, by reason of what Bryson, writing of Bosschaert’s *Bouquet in a Niche*, describes as its cultivation of a space of ‘diagrammatic clarity, of tabulation’.<sup>623</sup> However, an increasing number of art historians have examined the three-dimensionality, and hence, the materiality, of paint itself, which generates some interesting questions both in terms of how art was to be experienced, and concerning the nature of the object in the still life painting. While she is

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<sup>620</sup> The Royal Society, ‘History’, 2013.

<sup>621</sup> Classen, ‘Museum Manners’, pp. 896-7.

<sup>622</sup> Candlin, ‘Museums, Modernity’, p. 9.

<sup>623</sup> Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked*, p. 106.

not the first to do so, Alice Berghof, has challenged the two-dimensionality of the early modern painting in her discussion of brushwork and illusionism in the work of Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669) and Diego Velázquez (1599-1660). In particular, she has examined what was known as the ‘rough’ technique of painting in early modern art, characterised by thick brushstrokes applied rapidly to the canvas, leaving a rough surface. Here, Berghof describes the paintings of Rembrandt and Velázquez as having

three-dimensional, sculpted surfaces [...] The medium of the rough style is made of thick paint and layered surfaces, and its method visible strokes of the brush, the imprint of the hand, the mark of tools, and the impact of drops of paint scattered and flung.<sup>624</sup>

The effect of the rough brushstrokes, particularly when applied to objects in the foreground of a still life painting, was to give them a certain texture which beguiled the eye into reading the image as a three-dimensional object. Indeed, Samuel Van Hoogstraten in his treatise on painting writes of the rough technique as ‘perceptibility’:

I maintain that perceptibility [*kenlijkheyt*] alone makes objects appear close at hand, and conversely that smoothness [*egaelheyt*] makes them withdraw, and I therefore desire that that which is to appear in the foreground, be painted roughly and briskly, and that which is to recede be painted the more neatly and purely the further back it lies. Neither one colour nor another will make your work seem to advance or

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<sup>624</sup> Berghof, ““Nearest the tangible earth””, p. 187.



recede, but the perceptibility or imperceptibility [*kenlijkheyt* or *onkenlijkheyt*] of the parts alone.<sup>625</sup>

Artists such as Van Hoogstraten delighted in representing material objects in a manner which best conveyed the nature of that materiality, for instance a flat object on a flat surface, such as a letter.<sup>626</sup> This was a particularly effective technique to use for the still life, as part of its appeal, as Lowenthal observes, was the intimacy of the beholder's engagement with its objects, together with the curiosity and empathy they inspired.<sup>627</sup> Yet the goal of this double representation was not strictly mimetic. As Bryson has argued, the world of the painting, like the world of the cabinet, is a construct and obeys its own laws. While it is derived from external visual stimuli, it is not a facsimile of them, and the nature of this construct is historically determined, for 'What the painter perceives is a construct derived from, but not identical to, the retinal stimuli arriving from outer reality, and the construct varies [...] Perception is therefore an historically-determined process [...]'.<sup>628</sup>

Berghof is also influenced by the work of George Berkeley on the 'tangible object', for,

According to Berkeley, what is commonly misinterpreted as visual perception is actually two experiences: the sense of sight, and the imagined sense of touch; the latter is made of the neurology of retinal movement, inductively constructed

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<sup>625</sup> Van Hoogstraten cited in *ibid.*, pp. 196-7.

<sup>626</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>627</sup> Lowenthal, 'Introduction', p. 4.

<sup>628</sup> Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked*, p. 200.

projections based on the private logic of memories, and the public logic of social realities and scientific discoveries.<sup>629</sup>

Berghof combines an art theoretical approach with that of early modern theories of optics and contemporary phenomenology, in terms of how we experience the painted surface through touch, even imagined touch, as much as vision. The true test of a *trompe l'oeil* painting, Berghof argues, is when the viewer cannot determine whether an object is part of a painting 'until touch assures them that it is so'.<sup>630</sup> Here, the painting becomes a tantalus, denying the beholder physical access to the often exotic or luxurious objects it places before the eye. The cabinet, by contrast, appears to proffer its collection not only to the gaze, but to the senses of touch, olfaction and hearing. Of taste, scholars remain uncertain.<sup>631</sup> Yet the cabinet was itself a window on another world, an introspective world which is given shape and form by the person of the collector. In this sense, it is as removed from the world as the painting, a microcosm which rejects conventional reality, and substitutes it with its own.

Seventeenth-century still life painting comprised many specialised forms. One of these was the *sottobosco*, which emerged in Italy during the 1650s. *Sottoboschi* are defined by Karin Leonhard as paintings depicting 'botanical and zoological life in dark underwoods or at the humid margins of pools'.<sup>632</sup> The Dutch painter Otto Marseus van Schrieck (c. 1620-1678)

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<sup>629</sup> Berghof, "Nearest the tangible earth", p. 187.

<sup>630</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>631</sup> Classen, 'Museum Manners', p. 904.

<sup>632</sup> Karin Leonhard, 'Pictura's fertile field: Otto Marseus van Schrieck and the genre of sottobosco painting', in *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art*, 34.2 (2009/2010), 95-118, (p. 95).

is often credited with inventing this genre, and was fascinated by what were thought of as ‘low’ life forms in the seventeenth century, such as insects and reptiles. He painted a great many ‘forest floor’ still lifes teeming with life and movement, often depicting snakes chasing butterflies amidst thistles and fungi. Van Schrieck bred snakes and reptiles for use in his work, and according to his contemporary Samuel van Hoogstraten, his sobriquet was ‘*de Snuffelaer*’, or ‘the sleuth’, because, ‘everywhere he went, he sought out strangely coloured and mottled snakes, lizards, caterpillars, spiders, butterflies and rare plants and herbs’.<sup>633</sup>

Van Schrieck was most notable for combining his collecting and artistic practice in interesting ways, including affixing parts of butterfly wings to the canvas to give his depictions the most realistic presentation possible. An example of this technique can be seen in the painting *Thistles, Reptile and Butterflies*, which is attributed to van Schrieck (Figure 32). According to Berthier *et al*, who conducted an analysis of the materials and techniques used to create this painting using a photonic microscope, the butterfly seen in the lower right of the painting with open wings ‘has not been painted, but the scales of its dorsal side have been transferred directly onto the painting to a prepared place covered by a thick layer of white lead’.<sup>634</sup> In other words, van Schrieck did not simply paste the insect’s wings onto the canvas, but prepared them first by separating the scales from the wings, an

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<sup>633</sup> Birgit Fenzel, ‘The Science of the Studio’, in *Max Planck Forschung*, 3 (2012), ‘Culture & Society’, 78-85 (p. 85).

<sup>634</sup> S. Berthier, J. Boulenguez, M. Menu, and B. Mottin, ‘Butterfly inclusions in Van Schrieck Masterpieces: Techniques and Optical Properties’, in *Applied Physics A: Materials Science and Processing*, 92 (2008), 51–57 (p. 51).

intricate process which lends the finished image a ‘minuteness of [...] observation and representation’ that is rarely seen.<sup>635</sup>



**Figure 32:**

***Thistles, Reptile and Butterflies*, attrib. Otto Marseus Van Schrieck. The butterfly with opened wings in the lower half of the composition has been identified as comprising the wing scales of the common nymphalid butterfly *Iachis io*.<sup>636</sup> By kind permission and © Musée de Grenoble, MG 689.**

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<sup>635</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55-6.

<sup>636</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

Leonhard argues that part of the seventeenth-century fascination with ‘low’ creatures such as insects and reptiles were their perceived metamorphic qualities. Van Schrieck’s representational techniques arguably reflect these tendencies, not only by creating a work which incorporated fragments of the natural world, but by blending them into the very fabric of his creation, and enhancing them with colour. Van Schrieck also allegedly used pigments taken from natural subjects such as moss and rock in order to portray these subjects.<sup>637</sup> Van Schrieck’s methods were unorthodox for his time, and his paintings intelligible only to a small number of people; nevertheless he attracted a small number of very high-ranking and wealthy clients, including the Medicis.<sup>638</sup> Yet his work and practice also demonstrates the seventeenth-century desire to experiment with new representational strategies, to tease the boundaries between the worlds of art and nature, to use the fragment to stand for the whole, and to render this invisible, metamorphic underworld of insect, plant and reptilian life, visible.

*The vanitas and the construction of macrocosmic and eidetic space*

In his discussion of Raphaele Peale’s (1774-1825) still life painting *Fruit in a Silver Basket*, Jules Prown considers the macrocosmic scope the still life engenders in the connections it makes between discreet worlds, asking

Of what do still lifes speak? Of relationships – connections, reflections, support, power, balance; of cause and effect; of things that have happened and will happen;

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<sup>637</sup> This seems to be supported by Berthier *et al.*

<sup>638</sup> Cosimo de Medici bought five of van Schrieck’s paintings, and received the painter in Amsterdam before Rembrandt.

of taste, touch, and smell; of man and nature; of markets and appetites and genetics and diet; of time, mortality, and regeneration. If we are to understand what a still life signifies, we must attend closely.<sup>639</sup>

Many of the still life paintings this chapter has considered belong to what Bryson identifies as the ‘Albertian’ school of painting; that is, they function very much as windows upon other worlds, or imaginings of worlds.<sup>640</sup> They therefore succeed in making macrocosmic connections while simultaneously encapsulating a world within a world, both depicted on the canvas and embodied by the painting. Yet Bryson has suggested that the *vanitas* painting, one of the most well-known and studied genres of the still life, operates in a quite different way, inviting us to consider a very different kind of space.

While the *vanitas* existed as an independent genre of painting during the sixteenth century, such paintings became increasingly prevalent from the 1620s onwards, which has led some historians of art to speculate that external events such as the plague or the Thirty Years’ War were to blame as the genre appeared to fall into decline during the latter half of the seventeenth century.<sup>641</sup>

Objects in the *vanitas* tended to be drawn from specific groups of well-known symbols. Shells, for example, were visually and conceptually linked with skulls in still life paintings, and often appear in *vanitas* pieces as symbols of life departed, as in Harmen Steenwyck’s (1612-1656) *An Allegory of the Vanities of Human Life* (c. 1640) (Figure 33). Here, a

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<sup>639</sup> Jules Prown cited in Lowenthal, ‘Introduction’, p. 3.

<sup>640</sup> Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked*, p. 120.

<sup>641</sup> Bergström, *Dutch Still-Life*, p. 158.

number of symbolic objects including books and musical instruments are piled in a heap, but a shaft of light draws the eye towards a human skull in the centre of the composition. A shell occupies the largely empty space to the left of the composition, turned so that the beholder catches a glimpse of its hollow inside. The mysterious inner chambers of a shell were a subject of fascination for the early modern collector. Gaston Bachelard in his phenomenological discourse *The Poetics of Space* devotes an entire chapter to the shell, and cites Louis Charbonneaux-Lassay in describing how

Taken as a whole, with both its hard covering and its sentient organism, the shell, for the Ancients, was the symbol of the human body in its entirety, body and soul. In fact, ancient symbolics used the shell as a symbol for the human body, which encloses the soul in an outside envelope, while the soul quickens the entire being, represented by the organism of the mollusk. Thus [...] the body becomes lifeless when the soul has left it, in the same way that the shell becomes incapable of moving when it is separated from the part that gives it life.<sup>642</sup>

Bergström posits that depictions of such objects in still life paintings can be subdivided into symbols of the temporal world, symbols of transience and, less commonly, symbols of resurrection.<sup>643</sup>

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<sup>642</sup> Louis Charbonneau-Lassey cited in Gaston Bachelard, trans. by Maria Jolas, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1994 [1958]), p. 116.

<sup>643</sup> Bergström, *Dutch Still-Life*, p. 154.



**Figure 33:**

**Harmen Steenwyck, *An Allegory of the Vanities of Human Life* (c. 1640). The wisp of smoke from the lamp represents a popular allusion to the brevity of earthly things. By kind permission and © The National Gallery, London, NG1256.**

Objects in *vanitas* are depicted in a variety of settings, from cabinets and domestic settings to graveyards and ruins, and are frequently seen piled up in disorder, or perched in precarious positions, as though about to fall and break upon the floor, as they are in Steenwyck's painting. Historians of art have typically read these tendencies as 'an expression of negligence stressing the idea of vanity', and hence, the transience of all



earthly things.<sup>644</sup> Thus, in the *vanitas*, as in other still life paintings, there is meaning even in disorder.

A number of scholars have also noted the connection between the act of collecting and *vanitas*, in particular the curiosity cabinet's attempt to represent, safeguard, and so in a certain sense resurrect, 'the treasures of time'.<sup>645</sup> Zytaruk suggests that the early modern anatomical collection represents the ultimate *vanitas*, not least because many of these, such as the anatomy theatre of Frederik Ruysch (1638-1731) in Leiden, are known to have employed artistic techniques in the preservation and display of specimens.<sup>646</sup> Ruysch was particularly well-known for his tableaux of human skeletal remains, which were labelled with moralising messages.

However, some art historians have suggested that a number of important details have been overlooked in the study of the *vanitas*, and that this has led to a certain over-simplification of their nature and purpose. Bryson in particular considers the *vanitas* to turn inwards, rather than guide the viewer outwards, and notes the seeming contradiction which lurks at the heart of the *vanitas* – that like the luxurious objects it depicts, it too is an 'indulgence' and a *vanitas*.<sup>647</sup> Drawing upon the eschatological writings of Ignatius (1491-1556) and Calvin (1509-1564), Bryson demonstrates how a visual (or sensory) and literal reading of Biblical truth was later superseded by a figurative and symbolic one.<sup>648</sup> Writing of the

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<sup>644</sup> Bergström, *Dutch Still-Life*, p. 172.

<sup>645</sup> Thomas Browne, *Urne Buriall*, p. 2.

<sup>646</sup> Zytaruk, 'Cabinets of Curiosities', p. 2.

<sup>647</sup> Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked*, pp. 115-116.

<sup>648</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 117-119.

torments of hell, Calvin's text relies upon metaphor, whereas Ignatius' text is designed to trigger an imaginative response – the reader is exhorted to *feel* the eternal fire, for example. The latter creates what Bryson calls an 'eidetic' space; the space of inward vision. The *vanitas*, he argues, was born of this paradigm shift, for, 'As the branch of painting devoted to eschatological truth, the *vanitas* accordingly installs the greatest possible distance between visibility and legibility'.<sup>649</sup>

The *vanitas* is unable to create eidetic space in full, however, just as it is unable to create an Albertian space which opens out onto other, infinite spaces. This is because the *vanitas* by its very nature is trapped in the objects it represents, and the object it undeniably is, and in its own worldliness. It exists as the 'expression of an ensnarement in the world which nothing can overcome, and least of all the business of making pictures'.<sup>650</sup> Thus the painted representation 'embodies its own failure and *vanitas*'.<sup>651</sup> The space the *vanitas* unlocks is the space of introspection only, a trait it shares with the curiosity cabinet in its aspect as a moribund collection of earthly things.

Furthermore, Paul Carter argues that certain works of art do not represent the world as it is, but rather a way, or a tradition of seeing, which 'transmits an idea of the world that can be held, even if it cannot be represented'.<sup>652</sup> This notion was recognised by early modern

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<sup>649</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>650</sup> *Ibid.* p. 120.

<sup>651</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>652</sup> Paul Carter, *Material Thinking: The Theory and Practice of Creative Research* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2004), p. 27.

thinkers including John Donne, who in a sermon delivered at the funeral of William Cokayne in 1626 asked:

And how imperfect is all our knowledge? What one thing doe we know perfectly?  
Whether wee consider Arts, or Sciences, the servant knows but according to the  
proportion of his Masters knowledge in that Science; Young men mend not their  
sight by using old mens Spectacles; and yet we looke upon Nature, but with  
*Aristotles* Spectacles, and upon the body of man, but with *Galens*, and upon the  
frame of the world, but with *Ptolomies* Spectacles.<sup>653</sup>

Here, therefore, ‘spectacle’ reverts to one of its older and more literal senses of a particular lens, or looking glass, through which the world is viewed. These lenses, Donne argues, are a necessary evil: whatever we see through them, we see imperfectly, and we are ensnared by the shaping of the lens by the theories of an earlier age.

This idea is also expressed visually by the seventeenth-century historian, poet and rhetorician Emanuele Tesauro (1592-1675) (Figure 34). The image below shows an allegory of the ‘Aristotelean telescope’ in which the seated woman, Metaphor, examines sun spots through a telescope steadied for her by Aristotle. For Tesauro, everything in the world was a kind of metaphor, and, he argued,

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<sup>653</sup> John Donne, ‘From a Sermon Preached at the Funerals of Sir William Cokayne Knight, Alderman of London, 12 December 1626’, in Helen Gardner and Timothy Healey, eds., *John Donne: Selected Prose* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 277-288 (p. 278).

if nature speaks to us through these metaphors, it follows that an encyclopaedic collection, as the sum of all possible metaphors, must logically become the all-encompassing metaphor for the world.<sup>654</sup>



**Figure 34:**

Frontispiece to Emanuele Tesauro's *Il cannocchiale aristotelico*, 1670, engraved by Giorgio Tasniere after Domenico Piola. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, PN1045 .T4 1663er, fol. 4<sup>r</sup> .

<sup>654</sup> Mauriès, *Cabinets of Curiosities*, p. 91.

The second female figure represents Painting, and is engaged in painting an anamorphosis, whose message can be read in the central cone. The cabinet, like metaphorical and allegorical forms in art such as the *vanitas*, was thus a collection of lenses for examining the world, and functioned, as Michael Spitzer has contended, as ‘a model or a picture of something to which we can never have direct access’,<sup>655</sup> in this case, the mysteries of Nature.

## Conclusions

In conclusion, the representational strategies employed within the early modern still life painting find many fruitful strands for comparison with those of the curiosity cabinet. Both forms of practice were concerned with documenting and ordering a world ‘in small compass’,<sup>656</sup> but also sought to demonstrate the relationships between worlds, contrasting the temporal with the spiritual, life with death and the mortal with the immortal. Moreover, both artists and collectors drew upon material culture in order to interrogate the nature of representation as well as the perception of the material world in all its diversity – and sensuality – deploying similar strategies in order to achieve their goals. In particular, the interconnectedness between things that was so important in understanding the still life painting also informed the cabinet to a significant extent, and may be understood as ekphrastic in nature. Sensory engagement with objects both real and represented inhabited the same conceptual waters and spoke of an emerging empiricism in the epistemological

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<sup>655</sup> Michael Spitzer, *Metaphor and Musical Thought* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 2.

<sup>656</sup> Bacon, ‘A Device for the Gray’s Inn Revels’, p. 55.

discourse of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Finally, the use of illusion enabled the unlocking of a variety of imaginary spaces where new ideas and theories could be tested.

To use a visual metaphor, the early modern cabinet functioned rather like a panopticon, enabling the collector to view, if not inhabit, a number of worlds simultaneously, while he or she formed the centre and arbiter of this miniature cosmos. At the same time, the walls of the cabinet shielded the collector from view as an intensely personal space accessible only to a privileged few, or in the case of some aristocratic cabinet owners, to none but themselves.

Having considered art and visual representation contemporaneous with the cabinet, the next chapter will examine contemporary art of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. As Sterling observed in 1959, ‘The idea of reviving still life under the auspices of the ancients formed part of the romantic dream of the humanists, who aspired to translate antiquity into a modern idiom’.<sup>657</sup> As the following chapter will observe, the cabinet as a concept and as a visual practice has been seized by contemporary artists who, for various reasons, have similarly sought to translate it into a contemporary metaphor.

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<sup>657</sup> Sterling, *Still Life Painting*, p. 40.

## Chapter Five

### The Spectral Cabinet: The Cabinet in Contemporary Art Practice

One of the latest and strangest phenomena of contemporary art [...] is the resurgence of interest in the cabinet of curiosities.

Susan Moore, *The Financial Times*, 2013 <sup>658</sup>

This armor, this “costume” which no stage production will ever be able to leave out [...] We do not know whether it is or is not part of the spectral apparition [...] The armor may be but the body of a real artifact [...] a body foreign to the spectral body that it dresses, dissimulates, and protects, masking even its identity.

Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 1994 <sup>659</sup>

in our empirical investigation we become aware of the fact that we are observing the world from a moving staircase, from a dynamic platform, and, therefore, the image of the world changes with the changing frames of reference which various cultures create. On the other hand, epistemology still only knows of a static platform where one doesn't become aware of the possibility of various perspectives and, from this angle, it tries to deny the existence and the right of such dynamic thinking. *There is*

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<sup>658</sup> Susan Moore, ‘Links between the Renaissance cabinet of curiosities and contemporary artists’ works’, *The Financial Times*, 11 October 2013.

<sup>659</sup> Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p. 7.

*a culture lag between our empirical insight into the nature of knowing and the premises upon which the traditional idealists' epistemology is built.*

Karl Mannheim, 'Sociology of Knowledge', 1925 <sup>660</sup>

So far, this thesis has considered the salient features of a form of visual representation and its performance in a world which is – temporally speaking – remote from our own. In so doing, it has attempted to rehabilitate the cabinet as an integral component of early modern artistic practice, as opposed to the evolutionary forebear of the contemporary museum and art gallery. Challenging the premises upon which our understanding of the world is predicated and the limits of its representation are major concerns of contemporary art practice, but, as the first half of this thesis has demonstrated, these were questions which also concerned, and even dominated, early modernity. This chapter contends that there are important parallels between the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century curiosity cabinet and contemporary art practice, and that, following Derrida's notion of cultural haunting, these parallels extend beyond the visual.

While caution is needed in ascribing the 'attributes' of one era to another, this thesis contends that the concepts, visual strategies and spatial performances which informed the curiosity cabinet are deeply resonant within contemporary art practice of the past two decades. However, this resonance is not restricted to a singular arena of practice. Many of the artworks examined in this chapter visually and overtly reference the historical cabinet

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<sup>660</sup> Karl Mannheim cited in David Kettler and Volker Meja, 'Karl Mannheim and the Sociology of Knowledge', in George Ritzer and Barry Smart, eds., *Handbook of Social Theory* (London: Sage, 2003), pp. 100-111 (p. 100) (my emphasis).



through the artist's use of recognisable visual forms, and the construction and arrangement of these components in space. The artist may also refer to the influence of historic collections in speech or in writing when reflecting upon the artistic process.<sup>661</sup>

Alternatively, there are artworks in which such references are subtle, obscure or entirely absent from the work's formal and iconographical properties, and even from the artist's explanation of their work, but continue to operate on an invisible, epistemic and performative level. Artworks which engage with the cabinet in either manner are capable of transcending the referential, however, so that they become not merely an echo of past practice, but rather the continuation and transformation of a cultural performance which may be considered to parallel those of the early modern collector.

Drawing upon the historical evidence garnered in Chapters Two, Three and Four, this chapter uses the artistic practices of the past as a critical lens upon those of the present. Specifically, this chapter constitutes a response to the following question:

In what ways are the visual representational strategies of contemporary artists informed by those of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century curiosity cabinet?

This chapter begins with an example of how the formal elements of the curiosity cabinet have been harnessed by contemporary artists, and the problems of interpretation which arise. Specifically, I examine Mark Dion and Robert Williams' *Theatrum Mundi*:

*Armarium* (2001). I shall then outline a definition of contemporary art as a problematic and

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<sup>661</sup> See, for example, Natacha Pugnet's interview with Mark Dion, 'About Cabinets of Curiosities', in Natacha Pugnet, Jean-Michel Mazin, and Nadine Passamar-Gomez, trans. by Isabel Ollivier and Robert Silhol, *Mark Dion Presents the Ichthyosaurus, the Magpie and Other Marvels of the Natural World* (Marseille: Images en Manoeuvres Éditions, 2003), pp. 116-123.

contested term, foregrounding some of the key issues and debates within art history, theory and criticism. This chapter also briefly examines artists' adoption of museal forms of display, an important development in modern art which informs contemporary renditions of the cabinet.

The main body of this chapter presents a deconstruction and formal analysis of the components of contemporary artworks referencing the cabinet. In particular, this chapter focuses upon the significance of the found object, the readymade and the vitrine, and how these elements are used by artists to reference, question and play with different systems of belief and their visual representation. Finally, I offer some reflections on the nature of contemporary artists' engagement with the historical cabinet, in which various lenses may be deployed, but which ultimately settles upon the Derridean notion of the haunting. The purpose of this chapter is thus partly to construct an 'anatomy' of the contemporary cabinet; however, it is also to move the analysis beyond the realms of the visual and the evidential. As Derrida observes, it is not enough to examine the mere outward appearance of the spectre: its 'costume' is important, but only as a means of getting to the spectral body it clothes.<sup>662</sup>

## **A contemporary cabinet?**

In a 2003 interview, American artist Mark Dion (1961- ) described his interest in cabinets of curiosity and their centrality in his work and practice. The cabinet, he contended, constituted no less than

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<sup>662</sup> See Derrida, *Specters*, p. 7.

a paradigm in my practice since it exists as a framework which allows for a discussion of systems of classification, distinction or blurring of nature and culture, art and science [...] The cabinet is a flexible structure in terms of scale, period style, and value.<sup>663</sup>

Dion is one of the foremost contemporary artists to consistently and overtly reference the curiosity cabinet in his work, and has drawn considerable attention for this tendency in the academic arena.<sup>664</sup> His works have broader dimensions, however: for example referencing the earlier, Surrealist fascination with the cabinet, in his *Bureau of the Centre for the Study of Surrealism and its Legacy* (2005), at Manchester Museum.

Like Quiccheberg before him, Dion is interested in the human tendency to make connections between things – whether objects, ideas, acts or processes.<sup>665</sup> However, he is also interesting for his supposition – also common in academia – that the historical cabinet represented a malleable form of cultural practice, characterised by a certain unruliness of thought, as epitomised by Dion's remark in a 2013 interview that in pre-Enlightenment collections

There were no established rules in the culture of display [...] just competing models for reality since there yet wasn't a consensus of how to represent it.<sup>666</sup>

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<sup>663</sup> Dion cited in Pugnet, 'About Cabinets of Curiosities', p. 116.

<sup>664</sup> Putnam, *Art and Artifact*, Sheehy, *Cabinet of Curiosities*, and Endt, *Re-Opening the Cabinet*.

<sup>665</sup> Mark Dion, *Mark Dion: Methodology*, Art21.

<sup>666</sup> Mark Dion, cited in Frank Expósito, '500 Words: Mark Dion', in *Artforum*, 22 March 2013.

This is an idea which Dion explores in several works, including *Theatrum Mundi: Armarium*, or *Theatre of the World: Cupboard*, a site-specific work first exhibited at Jesus College, Cambridge, and produced in collaboration with sculptor Robert Williams (1960- ) (Figure 35). This tripartite work comprises two glazed wooden cabinets adjoined by a third, smaller cabinet in which a human skeleton is displayed. On top of the cabinet on the viewer's left, a taxidermied magpie is displayed on a perch. The two larger cabinets are of contemporary manufacture, and are minimalist in design, yet their contents, dense arrangements of objects and juxtaposition with skeletal remains evoke an earlier era of display.

The two larger cabinets disclose a wide variety of objects from different times, places and contexts from books and balances to stuffed animals and contemporary children's toys. In each cabinet, these objects are arranged upon seven shelves of varying heights, but the eighth, smallest and topmost shelf is empty. The logic of each shelf's arrangement of objects is categorical and hierarchical in nature, although arguably this is easier to discern in the right-hand cabinet, in which objects correspond to recognisable types, from bottom to top, following Dion's diagram of his work, stones, fire, plants, animals, humans, birds or aether, angels and God. In fact, the cabinet on the right represents the natural world, and the cabinet on the left culture, yet as in Quiccheberg's categories, there is no segregation of natural and artificial representation: books and images appear alongside taxidermied animals on the 'birds' shelf, for example (Figure 36). Moreover, angels are represented by children's toys in the form of figures from popular culture such as Disney characters, mixing 'high' and 'low' culture.



**Figure 35:**

**Mark Dion and Robert Williams, *Theatrum Mundi: Armarium* (2001), on display at Jesus College Chapel, University of Cambridge. By kind permission of and © Mark Dion and Robert Williams. Photograph by Roger Lee.**

The title of the work recalls the title of Quiccheberg's treatise, and evokes, as Williams observes, 'a sort of authority of hermeticism: a micmicking of the language of alchemy and magic, of Linnean classification, science and the academy, an ecclesiastical language

[...].<sup>667</sup> Yet this contemporary ‘cabinet’ presents a significant problem of interpretation. Can it be interpreted as mimicry, homage or pastiche, or is there something rather larger and more complex at play here? While it visually resembles a cabinet, can it be compared to a curiosity cabinet in terms of its concepts, spatial practices and performances, and if so, in what ways does it echo these? This chapter investigates how a historical understanding of the visual and conceptual practices of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century collector can provide a solid basis for interpreting such works.



**Figure 36:**

**Mark Dion and Robert Williams, *Theatrum Mundi: Armarium* (2001), detail of the ‘Lull’ cabinet, representing the natural world. By kind permission of and © Mark Dion and Robert Williams. Photograph by Roger Lee.**

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<sup>667</sup> Robert Williams, ‘Disjecta Cogitata’, in *Archaeological Review from Cambridge*, 19.1 (2004), pp. 139-156.

As sociologist Karl Mannheim observed in 1925, one of the difficulties associated with the interpretation of cultural phenomena is the problem of relativism. Cultural phenomena such as the curiosity cabinet inhabit very particular temporal, geographical and as Mannheim would have it, social contexts: they constitute the material responses to and expressions of a particular human project. Mannheim asks whether these elements can indeed be transferred as ‘fragments’ of meaning from one ‘visual universe’ to another, and to what extent this perceived universe is also a relative construct.<sup>668</sup> Furthermore, our conception of cultural practice is itself subject to shifting frames of reference. Nevertheless, while we may understand certain practices as situated in particular eras and contexts, and performing specific functions, as representational modes they continue to share certain formal and even conceptual elements.

Dion and Williams’ *Theatrum Mundi* reproduces the early modern practice of compressing all known things into the smallest possible space – a cupboard or a box – but also evokes the notion of the Great Chain of Being, a means of framing the world and all it contains into a single hierarchy.<sup>669</sup> Dion and Williams use these arrangements of found objects to refer to different categories of being, and in so doing, explore two different versions of the Great Chain, which constituted ‘the idea that an order ruled the universe, embracing men

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<sup>668</sup> See Karl Mannheim, ‘On the Interpretation of *Weltanschauung*’, in Kurt H. Wolff, ed., *From Karl Mannheim*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1993), pp. 136-186 (p. 155).

<sup>669</sup> According to the artists, the two cupboards represent the theories of two pre-modern cosmologists, Ramon Llull (1232-1315), and Robert Fludd (1574-1637).

and things, and giving them functional or relational definitions'.<sup>670</sup> Thus, objects in Dion and Williams' work accrue significance according to their proximity to each other, and to other categories of objects, whose relationship is defined visually by their higher, lower or relative position in each cabinet.

Moreover, objects on each shelf are piled up in the manner of the *vanitas* painting, so that each individual shelf resembles a still life composition. The association with transience and death, underscored by the skeletal remains at the heart of the structure, serves as a reflection upon the death (and resurrection) of the systems of knowledge which these cabinets represent. Additional symbolic details, such as the magpie's fabled attraction to glitter, and the inclusion of plastic toys allude to the notion that all systems of representation are essentially baubles, and illusions.

Crucially, however, Dion's work also draws attention to the shifting and entangled nature of visual representation over time, through its selection and juxtaposition of materials, concepts, motifs and display conventions. Dion has stated that he is primarily interested in the world as 'a symbolic system and a process, rather than as a material thing'.<sup>671</sup>

Comparable to the seventeenth-century still life painter, Dion and Williams harness a recognisable cultural object – the curiosity cabinet, and its associations and symbolism to create a tableau which, like the historical cabinet, constructs an elaborate allegory of the world, transforming found objects and readymades into contemporary emblemata.

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<sup>670</sup> António Manuel Hespanha, 'Early Modern Law and the Anthropological Imagination of Old European Culture', in John A. Marino, ed., *Early Modern History and the Social Sciences: Testing the Limits of Braudel's Mediterranean* (Kirkville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2002), pp. 191-204 (p. 194).

<sup>671</sup> Dion cited in Pugnet, 'About Cabinets of Curiosities', p. 96.



*Theatrum Mundi* also highlights a contemporary preoccupation with staging and questioning the systems, concepts and beliefs to which different forms of representation pertain. Contemporary art, Robert Williams contends, functions ‘to question, and to challenge canonical thought, even as theories emerge [...] to account for the art’.<sup>672</sup>

## **On the nature of contemporary art**

‘Contemporary art’, like early modern *ars* and the curiosity cabinet, refers not to a singular category of object, style, medium, process or aesthetic, but to multiple, relational categories of cultural practice. While this term is frequently applied to Western art of the past three decades,<sup>673</sup> and especially to art perceived to be of an innovative or *avant-garde* character,<sup>674</sup> its definition transcends the temporal, and is increasingly recognised as ontological in nature. Here, I set out a brief outline of how contemporary art may be defined philosophically. Beginning with some observations on the nature and historical usage of the word ‘contemporary’, this section will draw upon the work of contemporary art theorists including Terry Smith, Peter Osborne and Eric Fernie to consider the plurality of meaning invoked by the term ‘contemporary art’.

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<sup>672</sup> Williams, ‘Disjecta Cogitata’, p. 139.

<sup>673</sup> For a temporal (post WWII) definition of contemporary art see Amelia Jones, ‘Writing Contemporary Art into History, a Paradox?’ in Amelia Jones, ed., *A Companion to Contemporary Art Since 1945* (Malden, MA, and Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 3-16 (p. 14). See also David Hopkins, *After Modern Art: 1945-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 29.

<sup>674</sup> For a discussion of the *avant garde* as a means of understanding contemporary art practice, see Marc James Léger, ‘Introduction: The Avant Garde Hypothesis’, in *Brave New Avant Garde: Essays on Contemporary Art and Politics* (Alresford: Zero, 2012), pp. 1-13.

The term ‘contemporary art’ would seem to preclude all but the broadest of definitions. For example, all of the contemporary artworks examined in this thesis employ visual components, but as Peter Osborne observes, that visuality, ‘however pronounced, is its [contemporary art’s] least distinguishing trait’.<sup>675</sup> Moreover, if contemporary art is characterised by artists’ ‘rejection of art as a tool within a wider value system such as existed, for example with Renaissance or *Modernist* art’,<sup>676</sup> then these visual elements are fragments or relics cast adrift from their ideological shores. The notion of artistic liberty – both formal and conceptual – permeates Arthur Danto’s contention that

contemporary art no longer allows itself to be represented by master narratives at all. Ours is a moment [...] in art, of deep pluralism and total tolerance. Nothing is ruled out.<sup>677</sup>

Yet, arguably, contemporary artists do not operate within a borderless realm. It is undoubtedly too soon to tell whether what theorists now call ‘contemporary art’ will ever describe anything as precise as a movement, such as Surrealism. However, it is possible to identify significant themes, streams, or modes of engagement within contemporary art, as Smith and others have done.<sup>678</sup> Moreover, Danto’s contention that art is no longer

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<sup>675</sup> Peter Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All: Philosophy of Contemporary Art* (London: Verso, 2013), p. 5.

<sup>676</sup> Grant Pooke and Diana Newall, *Art History: The Basics* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 101.

<sup>677</sup> Danto, *After the End of Art*, pp. xiii-xiv.

<sup>678</sup> Terry Smith, *Contemporary Art: World Currents* (London: Laurence King, 2011), p. 11. For the identification of key themes in contemporary art see Pooke and Newall, *Art History*, p. 131, and Gill Perry and Paul Wood, eds., *Themes in Contemporary Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004).

represented by narratives might itself be conceived as a kind of narrative. As Grayson Perry (1960- ) has recently observed,

there are boundaries still about what can and cannot be art, but the limits are softer, they're fuzzier. And I think they're not formal - any *thing* can be art [...] but I think the boundaries are sociological, tribal, philosophical, and maybe even financial.<sup>679</sup>

These boundaries are in part delineated by the use of the composite word 'contemporary'. The related word 'co-temporary' was in use during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and appears in Francis Sandford's revised *Genealogical History* of 1707, in which a Stephen Eddi is listed as being 'Cotemporary with Bede'.<sup>680</sup> Moreover, the term 'contemporary art' was used by art historian Randall Davies as early as 1907 to describe the artistic practices contemporary to British society during the 1700s.<sup>681</sup> Interestingly, both examples use 'co-temporary' and 'contemporary' to refer to persons and practices inhabiting a historical era prior to the commentator's own. The act of defining art by its perceived contemporaneity is therefore an unusual and troubled practice, as all art was once contemporary, and therefore inevitably references the world or worlds of which it is a part. As Grant Pooke observes, 'The place of the art work will be inextricably connected to the time in which it takes place; the time of its being present, its being in the present'.<sup>682</sup>

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<sup>679</sup> Grayson Perry, 'Beating the Bounds', The Reith Lectures, Episode 2 of 4, *Grayson Perry: Playing to the Gallery*, BBC Radio 4, 22 October 2013, 9.00 am (my emphasis).

<sup>680</sup> Francis Sandford cited in D. R. Woolf, *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 86. Sandford's text was revised by S. Stebbing in 1707.

<sup>681</sup> Richard Meyer, *What was Contemporary Art?* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2013), p. 16.

<sup>682</sup> Grant Pooke, *Contemporary British Art: An Introduction* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 15.

A number of art theorists and critics have criticised or rejected the term ‘contemporary art’, including the Mexican critic, curator and historian Cuauhtémoc Medina, who has described it as ‘irredeemably vain and empty’, a mere stop-gap wheeled out to replace modernism.<sup>683</sup> Similarly, Julieta Aranda, Brian Kuan Wood and Anton Vidokle contend that as a descriptive term, ‘contemporary art’ exists merely as

the summation that does not admit to being critical or projective (in the grand tradition of modernist ideological voices), to denoting an inside and an outside, a potential project, but is simultaneously *there*, saying nothing.<sup>684</sup>

By contrast, Peter Osborne has asserted that contemporary art is ‘critically intelligible’ and ontologically distinct – both as a concept and as a category of art<sup>685</sup> – whose definition requires a ‘commitment [...] to a certain philosophy of time’.<sup>686</sup>

For Jane Deeth, who defines contemporary art as ‘the discursive practices that have come to the fore since the 1990s’, its conception is hampered by ‘the representational and formalist aesthetic codes’ which remain, inappropriately, ‘the dominant modes of responding to art’.<sup>687</sup> Similarly, Danto argues that in order to apprehend artistic practices

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<sup>683</sup> Cuauhtémoc Medina, ‘Contemp(t)orary: Eleven Theses’, in Julieta Aranda, Brian Kuan Wood, and Anton Vidokle, eds., *What is Contemporary Art?* (Berlin and New York: Sternberg Press, 2010), pp. 10-21 (p. 11). For the separation of ‘modern’ and ‘contemporary’ art, see Danto, *After the End of Art*, p. 47 and p. 12.

<sup>684</sup> Julieta Aranda, Brian Kuan Wood, and Anton Vidokle, ‘What is Contemporary Art?’, in Aranda *et al*, *What is Contemporary Art?*, p. 7.

<sup>685</sup> Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All*, pp. 2 and 47.

<sup>686</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>687</sup> Jane Deeth, ‘Engaging Strangeness in the Art Museum: An Audience Development Strategy’, in *Museum & Society*, 1.10 (2012), 1–14, (pp. 1-2).

which no longer rely upon ‘pre-modern’ and Kantian values of mimesis and beauty,<sup>688</sup> one has to turn to abstract thought and philosophy, and away from theories of sensory experience, particularly with ‘conceptual’ art, and art in which the visual object in no way differs from its non-art counterpart, as in the case of Marcel Duchamp’s (1887-1968) *Fountain* (1917).<sup>689</sup>

Both Peter Osborne’s<sup>690</sup> and Terry Smith’s response to this problem of definition is to interrogate the very notion of the contemporary itself, illustrating how this apparently simple concept may in fact hold many subtle layers of definition, and hence, meaning. Indeed, the core of Smith’s argument is that the word ‘contemporary’, from the Latin *con*, ‘together with’, and *tempus*, or ‘time’, first came into use precisely because ‘it points to a multiplicity of relationships between being and time’.<sup>691</sup> The hidden complexities of the contemporary have also been noted by Boris Groys,<sup>692</sup> Martha Rosler,<sup>693</sup> Grant Pooke,<sup>694</sup> Richard Meyer,<sup>695</sup> and Charlotte Bydler.<sup>696</sup>

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<sup>688</sup> Danto, *After the End of Art*, p. 98.

<sup>689</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>690</sup> For Osborne’s discussion of the concept of contemporaneity, see Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All*, pp. 15-35.

<sup>691</sup> Smith, *What is Contemporary Art?*, p. 5.

<sup>692</sup> Boris Groys, ‘Comrades of Time’, in Aranda *et al*, *What is Contemporary Art?*, p. 23.

<sup>693</sup> Martha Rosler, ‘Take the Money and Run? Can Political and Socio-Critical Art “Survive”?’, in Aranda *et al*, *What is Contemporary Art?*, p. 136.

<sup>694</sup> Pooke, *Contemporary British Art*, p. 15.

<sup>695</sup> Meyer, *What Was Contemporary Art?*, pp. 15-24.

<sup>696</sup> Bydler, ‘Global Contemporary?’, p. 464.

Smith identifies three core meanings by which the ‘contemporary’ can be delineated.<sup>697</sup> The first of these simply refers to the ‘immediate’, or what is happening now, which is the most commonly found interpretation. Yet this also has connotations of the fashionable, the dynamic and the reactive.<sup>698</sup> To be ‘contemporary’ is to be perfectly aware, and in tune with, the here and now. The second and third meanings are rather more subtle: these are the ‘contemporaneous’ and the ‘cotemporal’. The contemporaneous refers to those things which are contemporary with the subject under discussion: in this case, the art of the contemporary period. We must therefore take into consideration those things which are apparently external to the artwork. The world ‘without’ is the crucial context in which the work not only appears, but is formed, shaped and received.

The third facet of the contemporary, Smith argues, derives from the notion that contemporaneity also exists at the frontiers of past and future epochs. In this sense, it is *cotemporal* with them, but not in the neat sense of defined temporal parameters. Instead, it is held in negotiation between them, or is perhaps haunted or contaminated by them, just as the presence of the modern undeniably makes itself felt within the contemporary.<sup>699</sup> However, in his conclusion, Smith advocates a fourth meaning of the contemporary: to exist ‘out of time’, both in the theoretical sense that contemporary art exists after the end of

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<sup>697</sup> Smith, *What is Contemporary Art?*, p. 4.

<sup>698</sup> Aranda *et al*, ‘What is Contemporary Art?’, pp. 6-7.

<sup>699</sup> Peter Osborne defines the contemporary along similar philosophical parameters. See Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All*, p. 27.

historical meta-narrative,<sup>700</sup> as well as in the temporal sense that the ‘contemporary’ is perpetually situated at the boundaries of past and future time.<sup>701</sup>

In sum, Smith’s assertion is that contemporaneity refers us not to some neatly defined condition of modernity, but rather to a series of worlds or arrangements held in negotiation between other worlds with which they coexist, precede, or lie ahead. American art historian Richard Meyer defines contemporary art in a similar fashion, not by its appearance within a particular historical period, nor even in art which is perceived to be progressive for its time, but as a relational construct. A ‘contemporary’ artwork is thus one which has resonance across multiple temporalities. Meyer asserts that

the category of contemporary art might include not only newly produced works by living artists but also those time travelers which arrive “in our midst” from earlier moments and historical contexts. Those time travelers sometimes disrupt the distinction between contemporary and historical art by rendering the past newly present.<sup>702</sup>

Thus a logical solution to the difficulties of approaching contemporary art is to securely ground such a study in an understanding of historical forms of cultural practice, which examines both ‘the *coming together of different times* that constitutes the contemporary, and the *relations between the social spaces* in which these times are embedded and

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<sup>700</sup> For the ‘end of art’ debate, see Danto, *After the End of Art*, pp. xiii-xiv.

<sup>701</sup> Smith, *What is Contemporary Art?*, p. 245.

<sup>702</sup> Meyer, *What Was Contemporary Art?*, p. 21.

articulated'.<sup>703</sup> We need, as Richard Meyer states, 'to grapple with how the art of the past informs and reconfigures the contemporary moment'.<sup>704</sup>

If, however, one of the defining traits of contemporary art is the end of art historical periods and genres as we know them, those artistic forms or styles which do persist may increasingly be perceived as anachronistic. Yet, according to Smith, in the world of contemporary art,

almost every kind of past has returned to haunt the present, making it even stranger to itself. Is this a new era, or have we passed beyond the cusp of the last period that could plausibly be identified as such? [...] Contemporaneity is the fundamental condition of our times [...] <sup>705</sup>

This thesis therefore interprets 'contemporary' art as a form of cultural practice which is closer to what art historian Eric Fernie describes as 'a branch of philosophy practiced with materials and objects', than it is to what has formerly been understood as 'art'.<sup>706</sup> While Fernie privileges 'made objects which are presumed to have a visual content or to which we react aesthetically', this thesis interprets the objects of contemporary art as conceptual as well as physical in nature. Above all, contemporary art is marked by its diversity of form, media, technique, influences and subject matter. While, arguably, there are no longer any clearly identifiable styles or movements, there are nevertheless recurring themes and modes

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<sup>703</sup> Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All*, p. 27.

<sup>704</sup> Meyer, *What Was Contemporary Art?*, p. 24.

<sup>705</sup> Smith, *What is Contemporary Art?*, p. 255.

<sup>706</sup> Eric Fernie, 'Art', in Eric Fernie, ed., *Art History and its Methods: A Critical Anthology* (London: Phaidon, 1995), pp. 326-8 (p. 326).



of engagement in contemporary art, as well as an enduring fascination with the art and culture of the past. It is thus far more than simply the art of the ‘new’ and the ‘now’, and continues to be informed by ‘modern’ art.<sup>707</sup> Contemporary art’s preoccupation with time, doubt and the ephemeral has significant implications for the role of the cabinet within it. Within the shifting and labyrinthine architecture of contemporary art, the questioning of objects, ideas and their relationships is inevitable.

### **Adopting museal conventions of display**

Artistic interest in and engagement with exhibitionary forms is by no means a new phenomenon, nor are contemporary artists such as Mark Dion the first to evoke the visual aesthetic of the early modern cabinet. Historians of twentieth-century art have tended to associate certain key individuals such as American artist Joseph Cornell (1903-1972) with the cabinet in particular,<sup>708</sup> but at times entire artistic schools or movements, most notably Surrealism, have been cited as having drawn upon the early modern collecting paradigm as a major influence.<sup>709</sup> This is often explained through the artist’s use of certain visual motifs and juxtapositions. Schmidt Campbell, in her discussion of the work of Arnold Rubin on assemblage art, contends that

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<sup>708</sup> Joseph Cornell’s ‘shadow boxes’ and André Breton’s (1896-1966) *poème-objets* are often cited by art historians as the *wunderkammern* of the early twentieth century.

<sup>709</sup> See Endt, *Reopening the Cabinet*.

Surrealism [...] made use of the artist's capacity to yoke together the incongruous, underlining the surprise encounter, the accidental, the dreamlike. Duchamp's found objects and later the Dadaists' constructions exploited the irrational quality of objects taken out of context.<sup>710</sup>

During the 1970s, a number of prominent artists, including German artist Joseph Beuys (1921-1986), Belgian artist, poet and filmmaker Marcel Broodthaers (1924-1976), and Swiss artist Daniel Spoerri (1930- ), built and performed their own conceptions of museum display, using arrangements of found objects, vitrines, labels and classification.<sup>711</sup> These artists sought, in broad terms, to dispel the boundaries between art and life through works which resembled museum displays, but which categorised the world differently, while commenting on the acts of display and categorisation as philosophical, relational and social practices.

Jean-Hubert Martin explains this tendency as separate from artistic collecting, and characterised by the fact that artworks are

often temporary and gather heterogeneous objects from various categories and fields. Artists' museums and museum shows tend to create a microcosmic space where each element transmits a global view by relaying a single story [...] an overriding approach seems to propose art as unsequestered from life, and as only an element of a larger, anthropological whole. The Beuys Block [...] is both a

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<sup>710</sup> Schmidt Campbell, 'Tradition and Conflict', p. 266.

<sup>711</sup> See Jean-Hubert Martin, 'The "Musée Sentimental" of Daniel Spoerri', in Lynne Cooke and Peter Wollen, eds., *Visual Display: Culture Beyond Appearances* (New York: The New Press, 1998), pp. 54-67 (pp. 55-57).

concentration of Joseph Beuys's work and a synthetical vision of the artist's relationship with the world.<sup>712</sup>



**Figure 37:**

**Joseph Beuys, *Block Beuys*, Room 2, Hessisches Landesmuseum Darmstadt, (1970-2007).  
VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Photo by Wolfgang Fuhrmannek.**

*Image removed due to copyright restrictions. Link to image online:*  
<http://www.hlmd.de/de/museum/kunst-und-kulturgeschichte/block-beuys.html> (image 2 of 3).

An extraordinary *Gesamtkunstwerk*, *Block Beuys* (1970-2007) comprises significant groupings of sculptures and installations from various periods of the artist's practice arranged within seven rooms of the Hessisches Landemuseum, Darmstadt (Figure 37).

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<sup>712</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

These rooms were conceived by Beuys as an integral part of the artwork, which he continually revisited and re-arranged until his death in 1986. There is therefore a strong link between the symbolic *representatio* or self-representation played out within the authored space of the early modern collector,<sup>713</sup> and the idiosyncratic vision of the world portrayed in works such as *Block Beuys*, which frames its own documentation of separately conceived but connected artistic practices in an autobiographical manner.

The phenomenon of ‘museal’ display in art is related to artistic intervention within the museum space, as demonstrated by American artist Fred Wilson (1954- ). Wilson’s 1992 installation *Metalwork 1793-1880* within the exhibition *Mining the Museum* at the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, harnessed museal conventions of labelling and display in order to draw attention to the hidden, social relationships between objects.<sup>714</sup> In particular, Wilson applied visual and textual strategies of commonplacing in order to demonstrate a powerful, visceral connection between a group of ornate silver drinking vessels and a pair of slave shackles displayed together in a vitrine. Like the seventeenth-century *vanitas* painting, Wilson’s installation had a clearly moralising message, delivered through the artist’s evocation of the wealth garnered through the enslavement of other human beings, but also through linking slavery with the act of consumption in which human bodies become a tradeable – and expendable – commodity. In so doing, Wilson reversed the orientation of the collector’s lens on the world, turning it back on the act of

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<sup>713</sup> Kaufmann, ‘Collections of Rudolf II’, p. 527.

<sup>714</sup> Lisa G. Corrin, ‘Mining the Museum: Artists Look at Museums, Museums Look at Themselves’, in Fred Wilson and Lisa G. Corrin, ed., *Mining the Museum: An Installation by Fred Wilson* (Baltimore, NJ: The New Press and Contemporary, 1994), pp. 1–22 (p. 15).

collecting itself, and ultimately, the collector (and the collecting institution) who becomes complicit in these processes. Wilson's artistic medium, Mark Graham argues, is therefore the museum itself.<sup>715</sup>

There are thus a number of precursors to the cabinet's reappearance in contemporary art practice, but it may be observed that it resurfaces in fragments: concepts, ideas and processes, rather than in wholesale recreations. At the time of writing in 2014, there are a number of contemporary artists who overtly and consistently reference the historical cabinet in their practice, including Peter Blake, Damien Hirst, Mark Dion, Robert Williams, Rosamond Purcell, Hubert Duprat, Thomas Grünfeld, Natasha Nicholson, David Wilson and Roberto Jacoby. During the past few years alone, the cabinet, or rather its contemporary re-imagining, has also furnished the principal subject or organisational strategy for major exhibitions of contemporary art in public galleries and art fairs, including curator Brian Dillon's *Curiosity: Art and the Pleasures of Knowing*, hosted by the Turner Contemporary, Margate, Norwich Castle Arts Museum and de Appel Arts Centre, Amsterdam, in 2013-14.

The next section will examine some of the foundational concepts, media and art forms drawn upon by contemporary artists referencing the cabinet, many of which also respond to developments within modern art. Specifically, it will examine the use of found objects, readymades and the vitrine.

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<sup>715</sup> Fred Wilson and Mark A. Graham, 'An Interview with Artist Fred Wilson', in *The Journal of Museum Education*, 32.3 (2007), 'Place-Based Education and the Museum', pp. 211-219 (p. 211).

## The found object and the readymade

Writing of contemporary British art during the 1990s, art historian and critic Richard Shone observed that ‘The use of existing prefabricated objects, particularly furniture, or subtle retakes on such objects, has been a consistent feature’.<sup>716</sup> The found or readymade object, image, text, or space is also critical to much contemporary art referencing the cabinet, which the artist transposes into new settings, and may juxtapose with other found objects comprising all or part of a collage, assemblage<sup>717</sup> or installation.<sup>718</sup> This section will briefly consider the origins of the found object and the readymade in art, before examining how contemporary artists have utilised these objects in a manner which evokes early modern collecting practices. In particular, this section focuses upon the work of British artist Peter Blake (1932- ), whose practice straddles both modern and contemporary art.

Duchamp’s installation of a ‘readymade’ – an ordinary, mass-produced object – as art in 1917 is often cited as the key moment in which anything, potentially, could become a work of art. This also arguably served as the precursor to and catalyst for later developments,

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<sup>716</sup> Richard Shone, ‘From ‘Freeze’ to *House*: 1988-94’, in Adams Brooks *et al*, *Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection* (London: Thames and Hudson and Royal Academy of Arts, 1997), pp. 19-20.

<sup>717</sup> Originally conceived as a new kind of painting – ‘painting for contemporary experience’ as the German artist Kurt Schwitters described it, assemblage ultimately served to enfranchise the ordinary ‘things’ of everyday life, typically of the throw-away variety, as art. See Kurt Schwitters cited in Foster *et al*, *Art Since 1900*, p. 208.

<sup>718</sup> Installation art is often viewed as the paradigmatic art form of the 1990s. See Claire Bishop, *Installation Art: A Critical History* (London: Tate Publishing, 2005), pp. 8 and 84, and Stuart Jeffries, ‘When is a Room not a Room?’ in *The Guardian*, 24 November 2001.

including the pre-eminence of the found object in contemporary art.<sup>719</sup> Yet art historian and literary theorist Roger Seamon contends that the Duchampian moment is overstated in art history, and that as a work of conceptual art, it merely emphasized a particular quality of all artworks which is also present, in a different form, in allegorical or symbolic gestures in art.<sup>720</sup>

Found objects are often of a quotidian nature, and may take the form of the discarded fragments of everyday life, as they do in much of British artist and collector Peter Blake's work. Blake first became aware of collage during the mid-1950s, and this continues to permeate his artistic and collecting practice.<sup>721</sup> In Blake's practice found objects perform a dual function, representing themselves, as well as evoking their former, lost context. This tendency is well-illustrated by Blake's *Memories of Place - Paris, 2005* (2005) (Figure 38), a collage of found objects collected by the artist during a stroll through Paris. Framed under glass, a diverse assortment of objects converge, including stones, twigs, leaves, ticket stubs, a wine cork and a bird's feather. This tableau forms a unique visual object in which no component is read in isolation: *ekphrasis* demands that we consider the variance of forms, materials, colours, textures and their placement and relationship to each other as we would within a sculptural object, but more than this, each object is used by the artist to evoke a

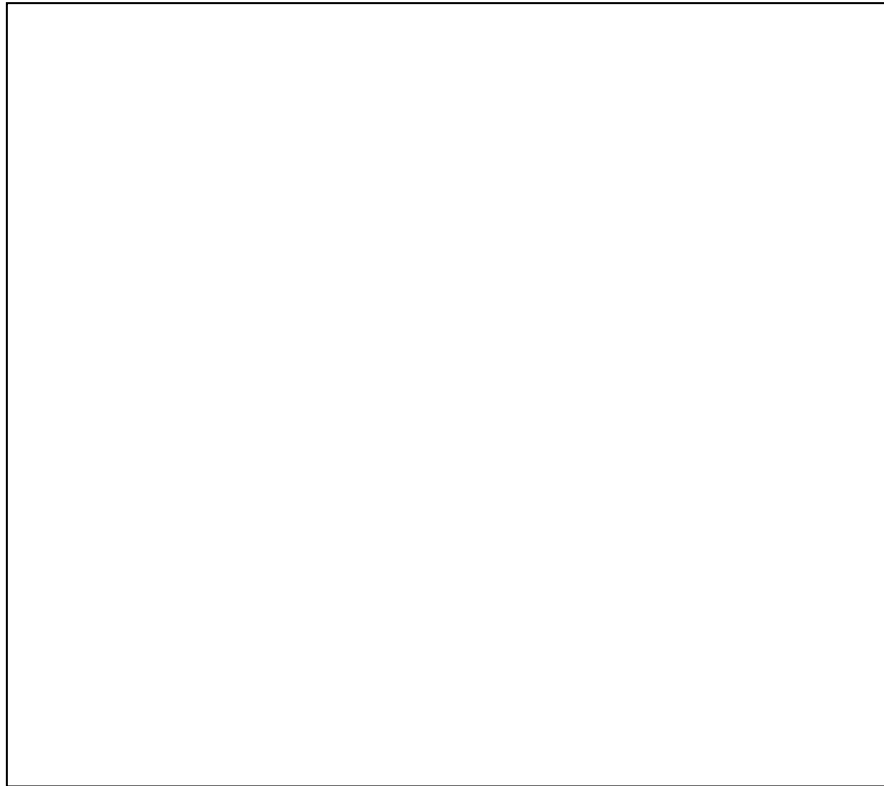
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<sup>719</sup> Many art historians have drawn attention to the increasing interrogation of what constituted art during the 1960s and the subsequent expansion of the concept of art during the 1970s and 1980s which resulted in artists' experimenting with new materials and techniques. Nevertheless, Putnam has observed that the concept of the readymade existed before Duchamp, although it usually took the form of small objects attached to collages such as ticket stubs. See Putnam, *Art and Artifact*, p. 12.

<sup>720</sup> Roger Seamon, 'The Conceptual Dimension in Art and the Modern Theory of Artistic Value', in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 59.2 (2001), 139-151 (pp. 140, 142 and 143).

<sup>721</sup> Nicholas Wroe, 'The Bigger Picture', *Guardian*, 21 January 2006.

particular memory. These memories are multisensory in nature: we can imagine the feel of a stone in the palm of the hand, the taste of wine, the smell of leaves, the sensation of a turn on the carousel. Collectively, then, these objects transform the world into an image through their narration of the sights and sensations of an itinerary situated in time and space which includes the very act of their collection.



**Figure 38:**

**Peter Blake's *Memories of Place - Paris, 2005* (2005). The artist has added the name of the work and appended a description of the walk on which he gathered each object. This note reads: 'A walk through the Tuileries gardens from Place de la Concorde to the Louvre'. Image via The Leicester Galleries, London.**

*Image removed due to copyright restrictions. Link to image online:*  
<http://www.leicestergalleries.com/19th-20th-century-paintings/d/pop-art/peter-blake/21112>

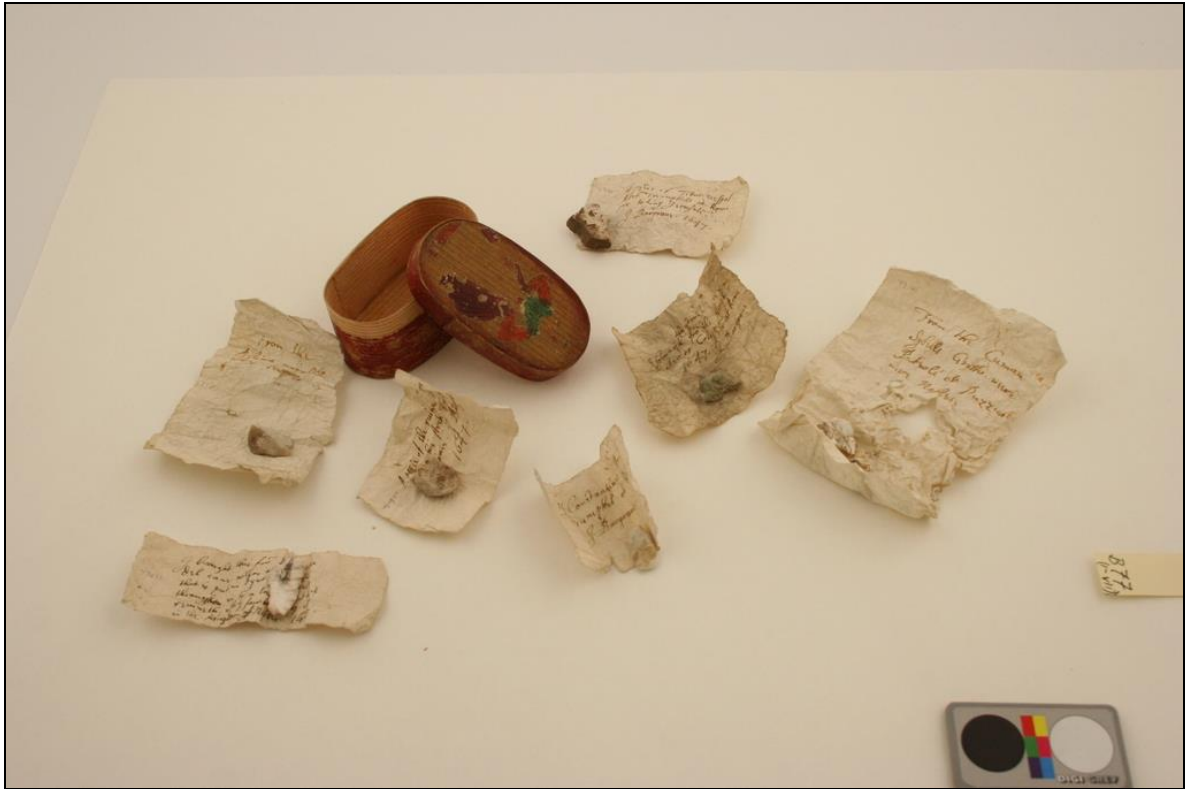


This image also represents the artist's relationship to the world through a conglomeration of natural and artificial objects, which recalls but inverts the logic of the cabinet. Here, the throw-away fragment, the mass-produced label and the humble stone are elevated to the status of art objects, each treated as if it has a special significance and meaning. This status was only conferred upon the most elite and desirable of objects in the cabinet's world, yet both strategies share a common denominator through their effort to propose a version of reality governed through the person of the collector or *flâneur* who articulates this through objects and their myriad connections. As a painter, Blake has stated that he often attempted to capture reality, whereas the use of found objects enabled the artist, as he put it, to use 'pieces of reality to create magic'.<sup>722</sup>

Blake's technique is therefore comparable to Otto Marseus Van Schrieck's transferral of butterfly scales to the canvas in his *sottobosco* works, and indeed, Blake's work might be conceived as a contemporary variant on the still life tradition. However, as an artistic practice, Blake's tokens and their handwritten label also recall the activities of the early modern Grand Tourist. In the mid-seventeenth century, John Bargrave collected fragments of stones from famous monuments and landmarks on his travels as souvenirs. Remarkably, many of these survive wrapped in their original parchment labels – some are laid together in small oval boxes with decorated lids such as the one below (Figure 39). One such label reads 'A peace of the ruines of Septimus Severos his Arch Triumphall at Rome', and is signed and dated 1647.

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<sup>722</sup> Peter Blake, cited in Dawn Ades, Peter Blake, and Natalie Rudd, *Peter Blake About Collage* (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 2000), p. 15.



**Figure 39:**

**Mosaic fragments in a box with parchment labels written by John Bargrave. By kind permission of and © Canterbury Cathedral Archives, CANCA-B/77i.**

Like Blake, Bargrave used these objects to attest to his own physical presence within a specific time and place; thus, these objects are also the conduits through which he situates himself within an historical record. The Roman stone fragment is not significant for any intrinsic quality, but for its perceived connection to antiquity, and for Bargrave's authored connection to that idea of antiquity. This is authored not only by Bargrave's inscription, but by the act of collecting the stone, and through its inclusion within Bargrave's collection. These tiny fragments may be interpreted (and performed) in a number of ways – as

personal record, as mythologised history, as memorial to Bargrave himself – <sup>723</sup> but what lends them their significance is their relationships to each other, and to the collector, without which, as Iwona Blazwick suggests, these found objects would be ‘lost’. <sup>724</sup>

Anthropologist and ethnologist Claude Lévi-Strauss offered a useful perspective for understanding assemblage art, when he contended that

it is not every object in itself which is a work of art, but certain arrangements, or patterns, or relationships between objects. It is exactly the same thing as with words of a language – in themselves they are almost devoid of significance and only acquire a sense from their context [...] In the case of “ready-mades” [...] it is the “sentences” made with objects which have a meaning and not the single object in itself [...] The “ready-made” is an object within a context of objects [...] <sup>725</sup>

While caution is needed in reducing complex cultural practices to orderly linguistic metaphors, Lévi-Strauss’ structuralist approach nevertheless finds a point of confluence both in the commonplacing and ekphrastic practices of early modern art and the curiosity cabinet, and in contemporary art which explores these practices. Bal for example, characterises Baroque art by its ‘entanglement’, <sup>726</sup> in which images inhabit multiple and mobile positions, and none of which are permitted to hold total dominance over the others. Instead they demand to be understood as a totality of fusion and juxtaposition.

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<sup>723</sup> See Stephen Bann’s analysis in *Under the Sign*.

<sup>724</sup> Iwona Blazwick, *Cornelia Parker*, p. 32.

<sup>725</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss cited in Robert C. Morgan, *Conceptual Art: An American Perspective* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1994), p. 3.

<sup>726</sup> Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio*, p. 25.

Many contemporary artists such as Cornelia Parker (1956- ) and Clare Twomey (1968- ) have exhibited 'rubbish' or the abject object as art, but *en masse*, replacing the rarities and *mirabilia* of the cabinet. Twomey's *Monument* (2009), first exhibited at the Zuiderzee Museum, Holland, confronted the viewer with a vast heap, eight metres in height, of broken ceramic objects including dishes, plates, cups, jugs and tiles. If the monument is defined as 'representing the stability of certain ideal values,'<sup>727</sup> then in Twomey's work, the stability and authority of those values is seen to visibly crumble before the gaze. Thus, if the early modern project was to exhibit beauty, similitude and variety by creating orders and hierarchies of things, the contemporary project is often to embrace the chaos and banality of the world, and to question the nature, possibility and desirability of the traditional concepts of beauty, order and rarity.

There is, however, some disagreement as to whether the found object should be understood as distinct from the readymade. Iwona Blazwick argues that the found object differs from the readymade because it is 'for the most part, unique'. This uniqueness is partly to be observed in the 'random' quality of found objects, but also, Blazwick argues, in that whether mass-produced or no, they have often acquired a history of non-artistic use, whereas Duchamp's *Fountain* was never used as a urinal.<sup>728</sup> Finally, Blazwick implies that the found object has a poetic quality which mere readymades lack, due to its capacity to evoke the artist's relationship with the world around them.

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<sup>727</sup> Argan, *The Baroque Age*, p. 45.

<sup>728</sup> Iwona Blazwick, 'The Found Object', in Iwona Blazwick, *Cornelia Parker* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2013), pp. 32-35 (p. 32).

While Blazwick's commentary furnishes a useful means of thinking about the nuances of the found object, and she is right to note that the found object may indeed possess the qualities of uniqueness – it may be unusual or unknown, for example – there are instances in contemporary art where the boundaries between found object and readymade appear to converge. In particular, the quality of uniqueness is a perception projected onto objects, and as such, even the readymade object may be perceived to possess unique traits, and its own, unique biography.

Duchamp's 'assisted readymades' – found objects attached to other materials or altered in some way – also find resonance with the 'applied marvels'<sup>729</sup> of the curiosity cabinet. These were hybridised objects such as the carved shell, the automaton and the drinking vessel made out of an ostrich egg: nature imitated, improved, augmented or embellished.

A contemporary illustration of an applied marvel is provided by Netherlandish 'Idiots' artistic partnership Afke Golsteijn and Floris Bakker's *Geologische Vondst II* (2012) (Figure 40). This work comprises the taxidermied hind legs of a lion sliced open at the rump to reveal the creature's innards replaced by a glittering amethyst geode. A further 'slice', supported by a metal bracket, reveals more of the geode. This work, whose title translates as *Geological Discovery II*, is one of many in the so-called 'opulent taxidermy' series of Golsteijn and Bakker, which combine taxidermed specimens of animals and birds in surprising juxtapositions with natural and artificial materials such as pearls, crystals, lace and ceramics. Thus, as with the applied marvel, natural objects are transformed into art objects through artistic intervention. *Geologische Vondst II* recalls the early modern

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<sup>729</sup> See Lugli, 'Inquiry as Collection', p. 123.

fascination with the surprising, hidden and cultured object, as well as with the *vanitas*, but it also uses the tropes of collecting and display to form a reflective and critical commentary upon these practices. It has an emblem-like quality which recalls not only tales of metamorphoses, but the cabinet's mastery of symbolic forms which were embedded into the very fabric of the space of collection and display. This extension of the found object in modern and contemporary art is fundamental to much contemporary art practice referencing the cabinet, which evinces an increasing interest in transforming known objects of culture into the emblems of a new age.



**Figure 40:**

**Afke Golsteijn and Floris Bakker's *Geological Discovery II*, (2012). Taxidermied lion and amethyst. By kind permission of and © Idiots.**

## The vitrine as cultural signifier and arbiter of space

The most recognisable signifier, to borrow a term from semiotic discourse, of a contemporary cabinet is often its apparatus of containment, display and, to a lesser extent, secretion. It is also here that the artistic fascination and engagement with the cabinet as framing device is most apparent. A common feature of the early modern cabinet was the often elaborate furniture used to house its collections, and their propensity – like the Augsburg Art Cabinet – to hide objects from the gaze, and to embed them into their own fabric, as well as to theatrically and ostentatiously display them. This section will briefly trace the origins and symbolism of the vitrine in contemporary art, through examples of modern art practice and the Victorian fascination and experimentation with glass in architecture. It posits the vitrine not just as a container of the object of art, but as a symbol of luxury, consumption and the desire for other worlds just out of reach. This section also investigates how the deployment of space, objects and display apparatus in two contemporary works of art – Damien Hirst's (1965- ) *Forms Without Life* (1991), and *Life Without You* (1991) – utilise some of the visual tropes of the cabinet in order to reflect upon relationships, authority and belief.

Early modern *kunstschränke* such as the Augsburg Art Cabinet tended to be wooden constructions which only incorporated small elements of glass, often in the form of illusionistic mirrors.<sup>730</sup> The hidden heart of the cabinet might conceal secret drawers, or, particularly in the case of *kunstschränke* from Antwerp, open out to reveal a perspective, an

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<sup>730</sup> See Matthew Winterbottom, *Secret Splendour: The Hidden World of Baroque Cabinets* (Bath: The Holburne Museum, 2012).

often elaborate miniature architectural space which nevertheless seemed to stretch into infinity due to the careful placement of tiny mirrors.<sup>731</sup> In contrast to early modern furniture built to house collections, the contemporary vitrine, from the French *vitre*, or ‘glass pane’, allows immediate visual access to an artwork, but literally seals it off and isolates it from the world without.<sup>732</sup> Comparable to a stripped-down perspective, the contemporary cabinet thus dispenses with the elaborate framework of concealment, and yet it still typically contains a (single) object at its heart, rather than a void.

As Putnam notes, the vitrine has become ‘a familiar mode of presentation in contemporary art’,<sup>733</sup> yet this is not a new phenomenon. In particular, Putnam cites the use of vitrines as containers of both living and dead bodies in the manner of reliquaries, for example, Timm Ulrichs’ *The First Living Work of Art* (1961) in which the artist displayed himself seated in a glass vitrine, or more recently, in Cornelia Parker and Tilda Swinton’s *The Maybe* (1995). Certainly, the use of the vitrine in the construction and presentation of works of art became increasingly prevalent from the 1960s onwards.<sup>734</sup> Yet the origins of the glass vitrine also lie in the mid- to late nineteenth century, and it is important to note that while the early modern cabinet is referenced as a container in contemporary art, this is also entangled with much later forms of containment and display.

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<sup>731</sup> Baarsen, *17<sup>th</sup>-Century Cabinets*, p. 25.

<sup>732</sup> Entry for ‘vitrine’, in Angus Stevenson, ed., *Oxford Dictionary of English* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>733</sup> Putnam, *Art and Artifact*, p. 34.

<sup>734</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34, and Benjamin Buchloh, cited in Julia Robinson, ed., *New Realisms: 1957-1962: Object Strategies Between Readymade and Spectacle* (Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press, 2010), p. 67.



Tony Bennett cites the ‘new forms of exhibitionary architecture’ and associated technologies of vision in the form of arcades, department stores and public museums as a particular influence on the development of the vitrine.<sup>735</sup> This new apparatus of display and spectacle, was, Bennett notes, the result of a series of complex social developments which took place during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and which culminated in the Great Exhibition of 1851, presented at the purpose-built ‘Crystal Palace’ (Figure 41), first constructed in London’s Hyde Park. This display, he argues, had a significant and lasting impact on the manner in which such technologies were harnessed in the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>736</sup>

Joseph Paxton’s architectural design for the Crystal Palace represented the largest quantity of glass ever seen in a public building at that time, and consequently it became ‘the best-known ferrovitreous building in the world’.<sup>737</sup> However, the use of plate glass did not only look to the future; it also evoked the fantasies of the past. To Julius Lessing, who visited the Crystal Palace at its second location in Sydenham in 1862, it recalled the world of myths and legends he knew from his home country of Germany. Writing in 1900, he claimed that

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<sup>735</sup> Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, pp. 51-2.

<sup>736</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>737</sup> Yanni, *Nature’s Museums*, p. 68. Plate glass was not only stronger, but could be cheaply produced in large sheets, especially following the repeal of the glass tax in 1845. See Chris Otter, ‘Technologies of Lucidity: Glass’, in *The Victorian Eye: A Political History of Light and Vision in Britain, 1800-1910* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. 86-91, (p. 86).

It seemed then that the world we knew from old fairy tales – of the princess in the glass coffin, of queens and elves dwelling in crystal houses – had come to life [...] and these impressions have persisted through the decades.<sup>738</sup>



**Figure 41:**

**A view of the interior of the Crystal Palace following its relocation to Sydenham Hill in 1854, where it remained until its destruction by fire in 1936. The barrel-vaulted ceiling recalls the Renaissance architecture of some cabinets, but its lofty transparency creates a new emblem which speaks to the towering ambitions for culture and society of the Victorian era. Photographer: H.N. King. By kind permission and © RIBA Library Photographs Collection, 39955.**

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<sup>738</sup> Julius Lessing cited in Michelle Henning, *Museums, Media and Cultural Theory* (Maidenhead and New York: Open University Press, 2006), p. 99.

The very materials from which the Palace was constructed were thus steeped in their own cultural symbolism, culled from the past and manifesting the cultural expression of what Walter Benjamin called the ‘residues of a dream world’.<sup>739</sup> Moreover, its contents in the form of the Great Exhibition represented other worlds – both geographical and temporal – in the form of Britain’s colonial interests, for example in the ‘Indian Courts’ in which ‘rich displays of jewels, shawls, agricultural produce, arms and elephant trappings transported visitors from the metropole to an imaginary, colonised subcontinent’.<sup>740</sup> The Crystal Palace was the material expression of a Victorian myth of progress, and has become an enduring symbol of the soaring ambitions of this era.

Benjamin Buchloh argued that the predilections for the vitrine in modern art practice demonstrated that ‘the museological conventions of exhibiting sculpture would be increasingly displaced by the display conventions of the department store’.<sup>741</sup> Rather, its referentiality has become more complex. Here, I examine how a selection of works of contemporary art harness the logic and visual display practices of the cabinet in order to consider belief itself, as a central artistic subject.

British artist Damien Hirst has also made considerable and varied use of the vitrine and the wall cabinet, which first appeared in his work in 1987-9, when he constructed a series of

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<sup>739</sup> Walter Benjamin, “‘Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century’ (1935)”, in *The Arcades Project*, trans. by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2002), pp. 1-13 (p. 13).

<sup>740</sup> Lara Kriegel, ‘Narrating the Subcontinent in 1851: India at the Crystal Palace’, in Louise Purbrick, ed., *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interdisciplinary Essays* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), pp. 146-178 (p. 146).

<sup>741</sup> Buchloh, cited in Robinson, *New Realisms*, pp. 67-8.

medicine cabinets, a structural form he has returned to on many occasions. Hirst rarely directly cites the curiosity cabinet as an influence on his work, yet his cabinets and their contents arguably reference this cultural form in their exploration of iconography and taxonomy. Artwork titles such as *A Way of Seeing* (2000), and *The Collector* (2003-4), also offer an insight into the relevance of Hirst's work to the practices of collecting, interpretation and display. While particular attention has been afforded by scholars and critics to Hirst's early and frequent use of the liquid-filled vitrine in the manner of natural history museums,<sup>742</sup> in which he suspended preserved animals such as sheep, cows and calves, comparisons between his work and the curiosity cabinet have tended to be fleeting, lacking in depth and often focus upon purely visual similarity.<sup>743</sup> However, more critical comparisons have been made recently, for example, by Ann Gallagher.<sup>744</sup> Nevertheless, while many of Hirst's pieces take the forms of visual art and physical installations, Hirst has identified himself first and foremost as a conceptual artist.

Hirst's *Forms Without Life* (1991) comprises an arrangement of seashells supported by six shelves within a utilitarian glass-fronted cabinet (Figure 42).<sup>745</sup> Each shelf displays seven or

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<sup>742</sup> Putnam, *Art and Artifact*, p. 37.

<sup>743</sup> See, for example, Matthew Palczynski, 'Organizing the Curious: Damien Hirst', conference paper delivered at Modern/Contemporary Art and the Curiosity Cabinet, symposium held on 5 February 2011, Seton Hall University, New Jersey.

<sup>744</sup> Ann Gallagher, 'Introduction', in Ann Gallagher, ed., *Damien Hirst* (London: Tate Publishing, 2012), p. 18.

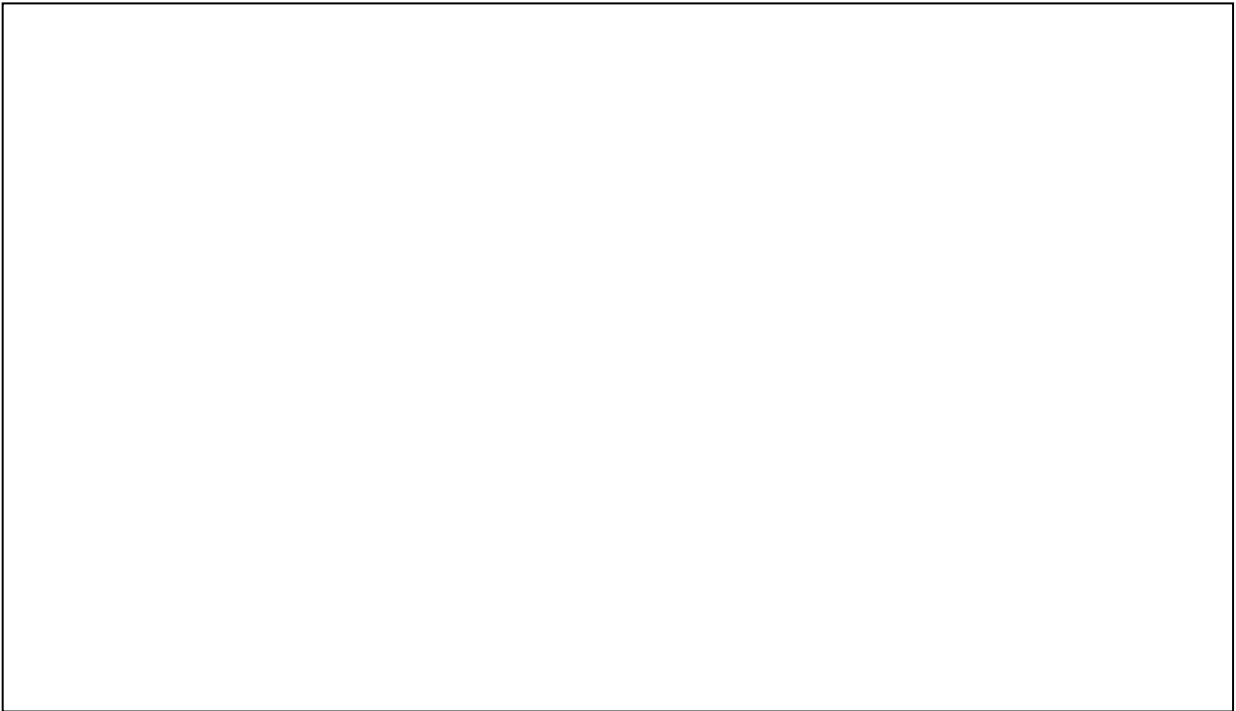
<sup>745</sup> *Forms Without Life* is one of an early series of works grouped under the collective title of *Internal Affairs*, many of which displayed objects commonly associated with museum displays, such as preserved specimens in cabinets. See Pam Meecham and Julie Sheldon, 'The Artist and the Museum: Muse or Nemesis?' in Pam Meecham and Julie Sheldon, *Modern Art: A Critical Introduction*, 2nd edn (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), pp. 203-236 (p. 206).

eight shells, which Hirst purchased in Thailand.<sup>746</sup> A decorative border is provided by strips of unpainted wood at the top, bottom and centre of the case, which seem to bisect the cabinet horizontally. In fact, these artificial divisions furnish a visual clue to the conceptual content of the work: the artist's dissection of the practice of the display of objects and systems of belief.

The minimalist design and modest construction materials of the cabinet are in stark contrast to the monumental and highly decorated structures of the early modern era, and despite the work's resemblance to a museum display case, there is no taxonomic order here, and no labels. The shells appear to be arranged purely aesthetically. Some are turned in a certain manner to show off particular features, and on prolonged looking, the spectator notes not only the delicate colours of these objects but the variety of their forms and textures. The work dazzles the eye through its use of the display case and its components, yet denies the sense of touch, unlike the historical cabinet, in which objects were meant to be handled as well as seen.

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<sup>746</sup> Elizabeth Manchester, 'Summary', Damien Hirst, *Forms Without Life* (1991), Tate, 2000.



**Figure 41:**

**Damien Hirst's *Forms Without Life* (1991).**

*Image removed due to copyright restrictions. Link to image online: [www.damienhirst.com/forms-without-life](http://www.damienhirst.com/forms-without-life)*

As visual theorist and cultural critic Johanna Drucker has observed, ‘Visual images *create* a system of belief, rather than just documenting its details and events’.<sup>747</sup> Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century curiosity cabinets represented the physical manifestation of a set of beliefs about the world, leading to a situated understanding of the twin realms of nature and artifice and their interstices on the part of the collector. In order to achieve this, collectors

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<sup>747</sup> Johanna Drucker, ‘Making Space: Image Events in an Extreme State’, in Francis Francina, ed., *Modern Art Culture: A Reader* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 137 (my emphasis).

assembled materials which enabled them to traverse vast metaphorical distances in time and in space, in thought and in practice. They also borrowed extensively from much older ideas and practices, and shared these with contemporaneous forms of visual culture such as still life paintings. Early modern collectors often perceived the objects in their collections as rare, exotic and unique, and this was reflected in the very names and categories applied to collections and their objects. Yet notions such as the ‘exotic’ are constructions of thought, and are thus dependant upon the context, treatment and especially the historical vantage point from which objects are considered. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, many of the kinds of objects which once inhabited the cabinet – such as narwhal tusks, crocodiles and anamorphic mirrors – are to a significant extent ‘disenchanted’ forms,<sup>748</sup> no longer imbued with the special qualities or status they enjoyed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Yet what made a natural object such as a *coco de mer* exotic to early modern collectors was not simply its rarity, strangeness, market value, or even its suggestive appearance, but rather the mythology that was woven about it: these objects were part of a world view founded upon myth, and hence, belief. Once attached to a rumoured tree that sprang from the sea bed, the *coco de mer* embodied the remote and the unknown which lent it an almost magical quality. In short, it belonged, as Benjamin Schmidt has observed, to a tantalising ‘exotic world’,<sup>749</sup> or more crucially its idea, which the collector was simultaneously attempting to grasp and construct. Thus the gilded *coco de mer* which crowns the

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<sup>748</sup> Patrick Mauriès, ‘Resurgences: the Spirit of Curiosity’, in *Cabinets of Curiosities* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2002), pp. 210-252 (p. 242).

<sup>749</sup> Schmidt, ‘Inventing Exoticism’, p. 349, and pp. 356-7.

seventeenth-century Augsburg Art Cabinet appears not as only as itself, but as the ‘ship of Venus’.

Hirst noted the importance of belief in his work in 1991 when he stated that ‘I cannot understand why some people believe completely in medicine and not in art, without questioning either’.<sup>750</sup> *Forms Without Life* is thus comparable to Hirst’s medicine cabinets and larger installation works such as *Pharmacy* (1992) whose contents appear to have no logic, clinical or otherwise in the organisation of their contents – they merely reproduce the appearance of a well-stocked pharmacy. Hirst has described these cabinets as ‘empty’ vessels; like the medicine containers they display, but rather than describing these as cabinets or found objects, Hirst considers these works as sculptural units, and it is from this perspective that their arrangement is most easily understood.

Accompanying his mother on a trip to a chemist’s, Hirst noted that she had

*complete* trust on [*sic*] the sculpture and organizing shapes [...] In the medicine cabinets there’s no actual medicines in the bottles. It’s just completely packaging and formal sculptures and organized shapes. My mum was looking at the same kind of stuff in the chemist’s and believing in it [...] completely.<sup>751</sup>

In Hirst’s constructs, it is not the objects which are ‘exotic’, but rather the manner in which they are displayed. The concept of the found object is itself changing through the practice of artists such as Hirst, who have expanded its conceptual dimensions. Past ways of seeing

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<sup>750</sup> Damien Hirst cited in Arthur Danto, ‘Damien Hirst’s Medicine Cabinets: Art, Death, Sex, Society and Drugs’, 2010.

<sup>751</sup> Hirst cited in Danto, ‘Medicine Cabinets’.



the world such as the cabinet have themselves become an exotic ‘object’, in the early twenty-first century: both through its perceived ‘pastness’, and through its associations with the mysterious, the strange and the hidden.

It is important to note, however, that Hirst does not exclusively reference the cabinet in his work, which frequently alludes to commercial displays of saleable objects, and to consumer desire and belief in the product they are purchasing. As Gallagher rightly observes, the cabinet is one motif in a complex iconography:

The model of the museum vitrine and its precursor, the cabinet of curiosities; the aesthetics of commercial display and advertising; scientific and medical imagery; religious motifs; all are merged in Hirst’s visual syntax with an acknowledged debt to a range of artistic influences and a very particular vision.<sup>752</sup>

This experimentalism also links Hirst’s work, consciously on the artist’s part or not, with the world of the cabinet. While early modern collections operated in very different contexts, they too drew upon existing traditions of display and experimented with belief. Indeed, conflicting systems of interpretation frequently appear within the same cabinet, as they did within the late sixteenth-century *studiolo* of Francesco I de’ Medici, the remains of which are preserved in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence.<sup>753</sup> Moreover, Hirst’s work illustrates the tendency of all human belief systems to become transfigured; to inhabit different categories of thought. As Gaston Bachelard so eloquently states in *The Poetics of Space*,

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<sup>752</sup> Gallagher, *Damien Hirst*, p. 18.

<sup>753</sup> See MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 13.

We have seen how freely the imagination acts upon space, time, and elements of power. But the action of the imagination is not limited to the level of images. On the level of ideas too, it tends towards extremes, and there are ideas that dream. For instance, certain theories which were once thought to be scientific are, in reality, vast, boundless daydreams.<sup>754</sup>

Bachelard's philosophy indicates that all ideas are free-floating: they have no true ownership, and the most ancient of concepts may be taken up again and again by different practitioners in different contexts, to be remodelled and fashioned anew. Furthermore, Bachelard argues, that contact with a defunct belief 'places us at the origin of all beliefs. A lost symbolism begins to collect dreams again'.<sup>755</sup> The historical cabinet represented the dream of an age: to map all known creation. In reconceiving it, contemporary artists interrogate that representation, but they also use it to ask questions of contemporary society.

### *Intercategoriality and taxonomies of display*

In Hirst's *Forms Without Life*, the object occupies fluid categories, on a visual, semantic and conceptual level. These natural objects are not displayed in order to demonstrate a scientific theory or idea, but as if they were jewels. Yet their presentation within a display case recalls taxonomic display, and thus these objects are neither fully artistic objects nor scientific specimens. The work's title also responds to the objectification of these collected

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<sup>754</sup> Bachelard, *Poetics*, p. 112.

<sup>755</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

items – once the receptacles of a living organism – and their transformation into a work of art. This blurring of boundaries between art and nature and between art and life which this performance sets up is comparable to the use of nautilus shells and the *coco de mer* which became cultured and symbolic objects in the world of the cabinet. As British art historian Timothy J. Clark has observed, while a work of art

may become intelligible only within the context of given and imposed structures of meaning, [...] in its turn it can alter and at times disrupt these structures. A work of art may have ideology (in other words, those ideas, images, and values which are generally accepted, dominant) as its material, but it also *works* that material; it gives it a new form and at certain moments that new form is in itself a subversion of ideology.<sup>756</sup>

In Samuel Quiccheberg's 1565 text, shells are collectible objects within the first and second inscriptions of his *naturalia* class. The first inscription is devoted to 'marvellous and rather rare animals', thus foregrounding the value of the shell as a representation of the exotic and the unusual.<sup>757</sup> However, in the second inscription, shells also appear as casts.<sup>758</sup> During the sixteenth century, the image of the shell was taken up and translated into new materials not only by gold and silversmiths such as the Jamnitzers, but also by craftsmen such as Palissy who cast animals, fish, plants and shells from life to adorn his extraordinary ceramic dishes. This theme is continued in the tenth inscription of Quiccheberg's *artificialia* class in which

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<sup>756</sup> Timothy J. Clark, 'On the Social History of Art', in *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 9-20 (p. 13).

<sup>757</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Meadow and Robertson, *The First Treatise*, p. 65.

<sup>758</sup> Quiccheberg, *Inscriptiones*, trans. by Leonardis, p. 10.

these natural forms are harnessed by craftsmen in order to produce decorative patterns in gold.<sup>759</sup> There are thus multiple possibilities within Quiccheberg for understanding the shell as an object, which are further substantiated by their treatment within early modern artistic practice.

Thus while operating in remote historical periods and contexts, both Quiccheberg and Hirst are engaged in an attempt to place things within certain flexible parameters – Quiccheberg for the easy adoption of his system by prospective and existing collectors, and Hirst in order to question the act of categorisation itself, while using the application of categories as a means of rhetorical and satirical commentary on science and belief in scientific method. In a 1991 interview, Hirst stated that

I like ideas of trying to understand the world by taking things out of the world. You kill things to look at them.<sup>760</sup>

Shells frequently appeared in seventeenth-century still life paintings, in which they were often lent symbolic overtones. Dutch artist Balthasar van der Ast (1593/4-1657) painted a number of spectacular works featuring shells, often juxtaposed with flowers, insects and lizards, as in his *Still Life with Shells* (c. 1640) (Figure 43). Here, twenty-one shells of different shapes, sizes and colours are scattered about in a rather crowded composition upon a tabletop covered in blue cloth. These shells have been identified as hailing from Indonesia, The Dutch West Indies, Cuba, Florida and West and South Africa.<sup>761</sup> Brightly-

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<sup>759</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>760</sup> Damien Hirst, interview by Stuart Morgan, 'Life and Death', in *Frieze*, 00 (1991), pp. 22-5 (p. 24).

<sup>761</sup> Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Collections Online, *Still life with Shells*, c. 1640.

coloured fruits such as redcurrants compliment the brown and yellow tones of the shells, a butterfly flits above them and a lizard perches artfully atop a mottled shell in the right background as it prepares to catch a fly.



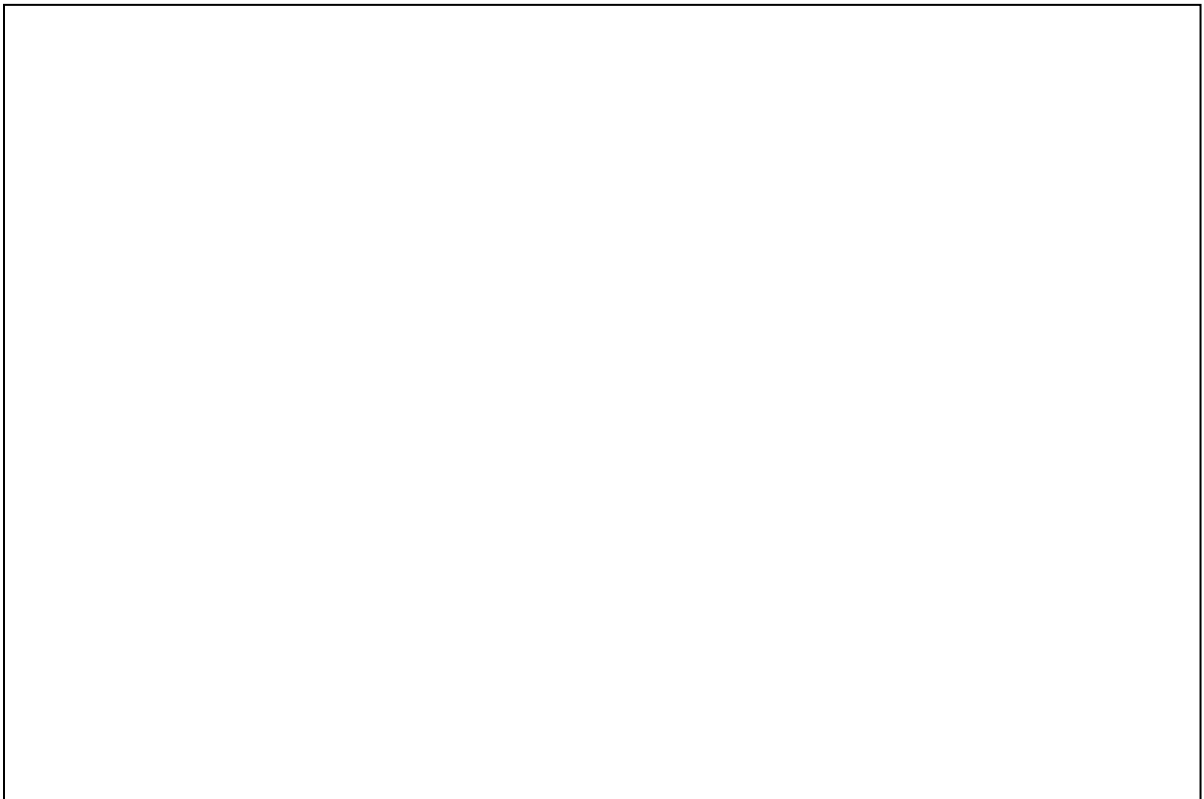
**Figure 43:**

**Balthasar van der Ast's *Still Life with Shells* (c. 1640), Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 2173 (OK).**

*Image removed due to copyright restrictions. Link to image online:*  
<http://collectie.boijmans.nl/en/collection/2173-%28ok%29>

Balthasar van der Ast's *Still Life* is echoed by Hirst's *Life Without You* (Figure 44), a variant display of seashells, positioned on a table as if for examination. Again, this evokes the manner in which early collections were experienced – by touch as well as sight. Here, there is a greater variety in the size of the pieces selected, but the work preserves the Cospian (or Legatian) distance around each individual shell. For Hirst, the cabinet-style

presentation of the former work enables the viewer to ‘get hold of [the work] mentally but not physically’.<sup>762</sup> However, the title of this work seems to convey the idea that here, the seashells are part of a performance which lends them life of a kind – although their former life is absent. As emblemata, Hirst infuses these objects with contemporary symbolism as well as historical resonance.



**Figure 44:**

**Damien Hirst’s *Life Without You* (1991).**

*Image removed due to copyright restrictions. Link to image online: [www.damienhirst.com/life-without-you](http://www.damienhirst.com/life-without-you)*

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<sup>762</sup> Damien Hirst, *Artworks, Forms Without Life*.

Hirst's work is also characterised by both repetition and revision, as the artist explores different ways of working upon a recurrent theme, idea, or symbol. The notion of the shell as a symbol of life departed will be familiar from the discussion of the seventeenth-century *vanitas* in Chapter Four; however French philosopher Gaston Bachelard suggests another possibility. The shell, Bachelard, suggests, is also a symbol of resurrection, and in the case of contemporary art pieces such as Hirst's, this resurrection is concerned with the beliefs that were once held about these objects.<sup>763</sup> In this manner, we return to the spectre, and an artwork which is haunted by its previous incarnations, by the artist, and by older artworks and forms of cultural practice.

The Russian Formalist critic Viktor Shklovsky contended that all works of art are dependent upon a device or devices through which their components are organised. The organisation of material has the potential to make that material strange – in a process known as *ostranenie*, or 'defamiliarization':

The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects "unfamiliar," to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. *Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important.*<sup>764</sup>

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<sup>763</sup> Bachelard, *Poetics*, p. 116.

<sup>764</sup> Viktor Shklovsky, 'Art as Technique', trans. by Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis, in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, ed. by Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1965 [1917]), pp. 3-24 (p. 12).

Thus, by deploying known structures of authority in this manner, Hirst references past ways of constructing knowledge, so that the work transcends its physical form and becomes a conceptual work about the different ways in which knowledge is constructed. Thus beyond the visual symbolism of the glass and wood case and the *vanitas* symbols of life departed, what Hirst creates is not a cabinet, but a means of closing off a sanctified space in order to reproduce – like a cabinet engraving – a portrait of a system of belief to which the artist does not necessarily subscribe, and in which the apparatus of the cabinet and its contents – conceived as emblemata – operate as his artistic tools, and hence, both object and subject.

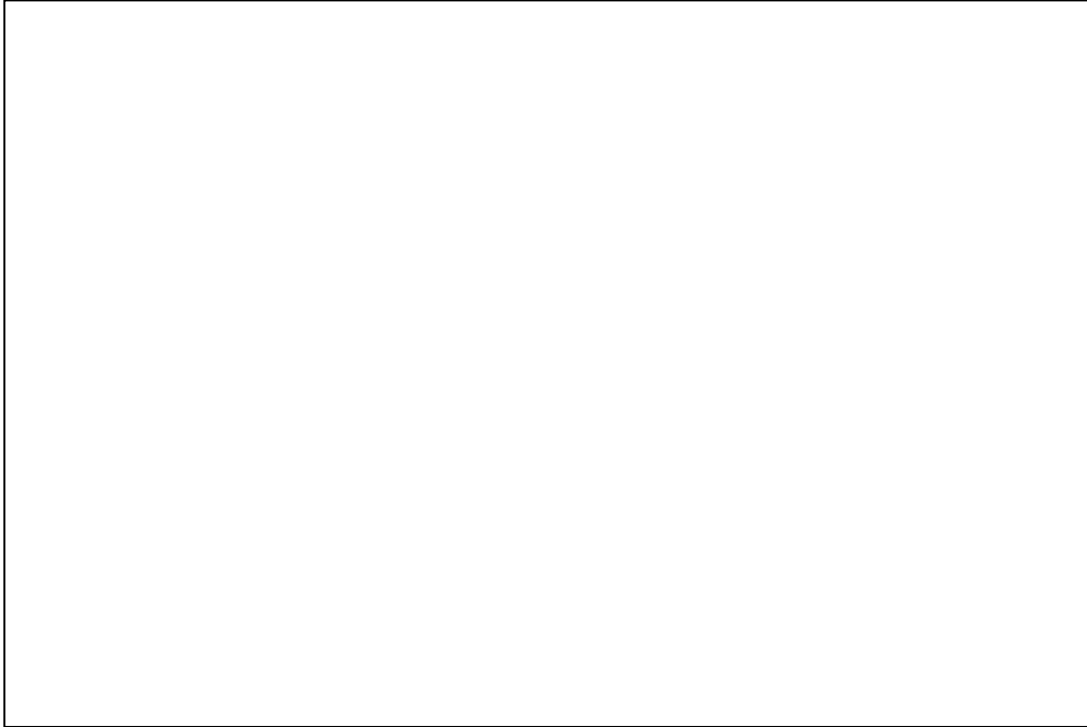
### *Performance*

The cabinets of Dion, Blake and Hirst, with their multiple layers of referentiality, demonstrate that contemporary artists are not confined to particular forms when referencing early collections. Moreover, a number of contemporary artists reference the wonders of the cabinet without tackling its physical structure or iconography. For example, Dutch artist Berndnaut Smilde (1978- ) created a series of works in which the artist used a smoke machine to help create nimbus clouds in various settings including D'Aspremont-Lynden Castle in Rekem, Belgium (Figure 45). These works exist both as performances, and as photographs. Smilde has stated that

Making the event in the hall it's something different – for me this is the work, but that's more like a collective memory you have. For a very short moment, people in that space connected to that space and [...] this [...] [indicating a photograph] is



more like a document of something that happened there and is now gone. If you re-enter the space it's just empty now [...] <sup>765</sup>



**Figure 45:**

**Berndnaut Smilde, *Nimbus D'Aspremont* (2012). Photograph by Cassander Eeftinck Schattenkerk.**

*Image removed due to copyright restrictions. Link to image online: <http://www.berndnaut.nl/works.htm> (image 6 of 24).*

Smilde's work reveals a fascination with spectacle, theatre and transience which were major preoccupations of the cabinet, but the artist also recreates a comparable mode of social performance to the cabinet's. The language employed by the popular press to describe Smilde's work reveals the artist as a magician – one who has mastered artifice and

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<sup>765</sup> BBC News, 'How to Make Clouds Indoors – The Work of Berndnaut Smilde', 16 January 2013.

illusion. He is described as a ‘conjurer’, whose cloud forms, while ‘real’, are in fact referencing the painted clouds of seventeenth-century Dutch landscape paintings.<sup>766</sup> More importantly, however, this theatrical work does not conceal the means by which the wonder at its centre is created. What the spectator experiences is a social performance in which art imitates nature, in which a hidden ‘object’ is revealed in seemingly empty space, and in which a fragment of the outside world is seemingly miniaturised and brought within the beholder’s grasp. Thus, although its visual references to the cabinet are obscure, Smilde’s work references the culture of the cabinet conceptually, and demonstrates how contemporary artistic engagement is not always locked into particular forms, but also emerges in ideas, practices and performances.

### **On the nature of the spectre**

There are various lenses which may be usefully deployed in order to examine the nature of contemporary artists’ re-engagement with the cabinet. The use of appropriation in contemporary art and visual culture, where pre-existing forms such as an image, symbol or object are borrowed in full or in part and re-interpreted in a different context or guise, thus creating a new work of art, has recently become a key subject of study in anthropological enquiry. Appropriation is by no means a new practice, but social anthropologist Arnd Schneider has observed that while ‘The incorporation of cultural difference, historically, has been a feature of art, [...] it has arguably been one of the central and defining

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<sup>766</sup> Georgina Wells, ‘An Artist Conjures Real-Life Clouds Inside the Gallery’, in *Artlog* 21 June 2012.

characteristics of twentieth-century art'.<sup>767</sup> It could also be argued that all art relies upon appropriation to some extent, but 'appropriation art' as a distinct term describing the work of individual artists who employ appropriation as a key component such as Sherrie Levine (1947- ) and Jeff Koons (1955- ) did not truly emerge until the 1980s.<sup>768</sup> Crucially for Schneider it is the recognition of cultural 'otherness' which

lies at the bottom of any appropriation, anthropological or artistic. For if we were unable to discern what is not ours, or other, we could not transform it into what is ours [...] even if its otherness is respected in a new context.<sup>769</sup>

Thus it may be postulated that the 'appropriation' of the early modern curiosity cabinet by contemporary artists involves both a conscious recognition and understanding of it as an alien cultural form or expression, as well as the desire to rehabilitate it, to reanimate this archaic form with a new cultural relevance.

In order to determine the reasons for this, the anthropological approach may be compared with the theories of philosopher and semiotician Roland Barthes (1915 -1980) who discussed the cultural appropriation of signs in his *Mythologies* of 1957. For Barthes,

the best weapon against myth is perhaps to mythify it in its turn, and to produce an *artificial myth*: and this reconstituted myth will in fact be a mythology [...] All that

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<sup>767</sup> Arnd Schneider, 'Appropriations', in Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright, eds., *Contemporary Art and Anthropology* (Oxford: Berg, 2006), pp. 29-51 (p. 29).

<sup>768</sup> Tate Collection, Glossary, 'Appropriation'.

<sup>769</sup> Schneider, 'Appropriations', p. 48.

is needed is to use it as a departure point for a third semiological chain, to take its signification as the first term of a second myth.<sup>770</sup>

In other words, Barthes proposes a breaking apart or deconstruction of the original sign, in this case, the curiosity cabinet, and the creation of a new, pseudo-cabinet which serves to critique the ideology of the first. This, it has been argued, ‘raises questions of originality, authenticity and authorship, and belongs to the long modernist tradition of art that questions the nature or definition of art itself’.<sup>771</sup> Yet as Hal Foster observes, appropriation as a form of critique is a highly complex maker of meaning, of which it is dangerous to assume the occupation of a position outside of myth, ‘a place of subjectivity beyond ideology’.<sup>772</sup>

Contemporary artistic engagement with the cabinet is not merely one of appropriation, or even of re-appropriation, as the historical cabinet itself appropriated objects, forms, concepts, practices and symbols from the world it attempted to mirror; however, this is a useful starting point. Indeed, the language with which complex and interconnected cultural phenomena in which older, or historical tendencies are seen to resurface is diverse and shifting. Contemporary scholars from a variety of disciplinary perspectives write of revivals, echoes, hauntings, spectres, phantoms, revenants, appropriations, quotations, re-thinkings, re-imaginings, *détournements*, *ricorso*, *rapprochements*, but none of these terms, seemingly, are truly adequate (either in breadth, complexity or precision) to describe the nature of the experience of the past within the contemporary moment. Some of these terms

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<sup>770</sup> Roland Barthes cited in Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century* (Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press, 1996 [1957]), p. 93.

<sup>771</sup> Tate Collection, ‘Appropriation’.

<sup>772</sup> Foster, *The Return of the Real*, p. 93.

are more poetic and evocative and are strongly associated with particular disciplines such as art history and anthropology, and their subfields of enquiry such as semiotics. Others attempt to trace broader tendencies in art and thought include the so-called ‘archival impulse’. Erwin Panofsky wrote of both Renaissance and ‘renascences’ in art and cultural history, and the tendency of all revivals to be characterised by both ‘estrangement’ and ‘affinity’ between the contemporary moment, and the experience and understanding of the past in the present.<sup>773</sup>

While contemporary cabinets do engage in acts of appropriation and myth-making, the notion of ‘spectrality’ is perhaps more accurate, and is discussed at length by Derrida in his philosophical commentary on the writing of Karl Marx. Here, Derrida maintains that society is subject to a continual haunting by generations of ghosts – of the past, present and future. However, he reasons,

For there to be [a] ghost, there must be a return to the body, but to a body that is more abstract than ever. The spectrogenic process corresponds therefore to a paradoxical *incorporation*. Once ideas or thoughts (*Gedanke*) are detached from their substratum, one engenders some ghost by *giving them a body*. Not by returning to the living body from which ideas and thoughts have been torn loose, but by incarnating the latter *in another artifactual body, a prosthetic body*, a ghost of spirit,

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<sup>773</sup> Erwin Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (New York: Icon, 1972), p. 42.

one might say a ghost of the ghost if [...] the first spiritualization also, and already, produces some specter.<sup>774</sup>

In other words, the spectre has to materialise in some way – taking on a form which is related to, but different from, its archaic form. Yet, as Derrida suggests, spectres beget spectres, and so this new form may, in turn, create another which is related to both the old and new spectres. Understanding the material processes or artefacts these inhabit and how their forms are related – both to one another, and to past cultural forms, is to study a complex web of cultural, historical, ideological and geographical associations, which mere appropriation is inadequate to describe.

Derrida's conceptualisation of the spectre enables the historian to articulate and explain why the contemporary cabinet is so diverse in form and content, and relates this back to ideas and concepts and their lack of ownership. This is apparent in Quiccheberg's text as he describes the many sources to which he is indebted. The contemporary cabinet has to be embodied in material form to be apprehended, but only in a form which can be understood from a twenty-first century perspective. Even were it to inhabit its original form, its meaning could not be the same as the beholder would be viewing it from yet another rung on Mannheim's staircase.

## Conclusions

This chapter has examined the role and significance of some of the formal elements of contemporary art referencing the historical cabinet, including the found object, the

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<sup>774</sup> Derrida, *Specters*, pp. 157-158.

readymade and the vitrine, which also possess a history of use in modern art exploring museal conventions of display. In particular, this chapter has investigated how the found object has been deployed both as itself and as a metonym, and how the vitrine has enabled the cabinet to become a cultural ‘found’ object in its own right. From this it is possible to discern a number of emerging themes. The examples of contemporary artworks examined here have evinced a concern with visual spectacle, a preoccupation with death and decay, and an interest in the material, sculptural, visual and symbolic potential of the container of art.

Writing in the 1990s, the influential art historian and critic Hal Foster argued that the experimental nature of art during the 1960s had set in motion ‘an investigation of the institution of art, its perceptual and cognitive, structural and discursive parameters’.<sup>775</sup> The re-imagining of the early modern curiosity cabinet has emerged as significant and recurring elements of this artistic voyage of exploration. However, this ‘return to curiosity’ also goes further, in that contemporary artists have begun to investigate the iconographies, taxonomies and epistemologies which underpin the interpretation and display of objects, as well as exploring the act of collecting itself.

The cabinet has been used as a critical tool, as a means of displaying seemingly ‘worthless’ or disenchanted material – once wonders, but now commonplace – and of bringing to bear an alternative lens on the world, which brings this narrative back to the beginning of this chapter, which opened with some reflections upon changing epistemic vantage points and

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<sup>775</sup> Hal Foster cited in Putnam, *Art and Artifact*, p. 26.

their impact upon knowledge and the act of knowing by the influential early twentieth century sociologist Karl Mannheim.

The cabinet has become both a curiosity and a cultural object in its own right – but not one which is unthinkingly referenced or re-enacted by artists such as Dion, Blake and Hirst. The flexibility and porosity of the cabinet’s conceptual and physical structures outlined by Samuel Quiccheberg have been harnessed as visual tools in an artistic language which draws upon fragments of reality in order to question the larger structures to which these belong. As such, not only does contemporary art realise such complex ‘objects’ as works of art, but this appears to re-affirm the emerging status of contemporary art itself as a form of thinking or philosophy practiced through material objects.

If the curiosity cabinet existed to demystify the world, contemporary art seeks to problematise it, to obscure it, to re-mystify it: in short, to tackle the very mythologies upon which representation is built. This is achieved, in part, through a re-assembly of some of the most recognisable components of the historical cabinet, but also in twisting its logic and making it strange – neither reconstruction nor re-enactment, but rather a chimerical splicing of various forms of cultural objects. Johanna Drucker considers this to be part of a dual process of ‘defamiliarization’ and ‘refamiliarization’ in art, whereby familiar images made strange are reconceived as part of a process and a system upon which they are dependent.<sup>776</sup>

The vastness and heterogeneity of the cabinet’s endeavour is also reflected in contemporary art practice, not only through its diversity of forms and media, but through its often

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<sup>776</sup> Drucker, ‘Making Space’, p. 138.



complex referentiality, as well as its breadth of scope which tackles issues from philosophical problems to social issues and the minute observations of everyday life. This too enables contemporary art to make ambitious conceptual leaps: to seek out new areas of enquiry, to forge new connections and dialogues between past and present ideas, and ultimately to present new symbolisms and mythologies.

## Chapter Six

### Conclusion: Conduits between Worlds

Who knows but after my honourable burial, I may have a glorious resurrection in following ages, since time brings strange and unusual things to passe.

Margaret Cavendish, 'To the Two Universities', 1655 <sup>777</sup>

The treasures of time lie high, in Urnes, Coynes, and Monuments, scarce below the roots of some vegetables. Time hath endlesse rarities, and shows of all varieties; which reveals old things in heaven, makes new discoveries in earth, and even earth it self a discovery [...] and a large part of the earth is still in the Urne unto us.

Thomas Browne, *Urne Buriall*, 1658 <sup>778</sup>

Art is the real time machine, that allows us to approach so far a shore.

Igor Mitoraj, 1994 <sup>779</sup>

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<sup>777</sup> Margaret Cavendish cited in Emma L. E. Rees, *Margaret Cavendish: Gender, Genre, Exile* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 1.

<sup>778</sup> Thomas Browne, *Urne Buriall*, p. 2.

<sup>779</sup> Igor Mitoraj cited in James Putnam and Vivian Davies, eds., *Time Machine: Ancient Egypt and Contemporary Art* (London: The Trustees of The British Museum, 1994), p. 22.

The sixteenth- and seventeenth-century curiosity cabinet appears to have become the subject of a ‘glorious resurrection’ during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. During the last two decades, the cabinet’s visual representational strategies have been harnessed as the subject, aesthetic, or framing device for artworks, exhibitions, conferences and symposia, theatrical performances, books, magazines, blogs and even shops. Yet the reappearance of these strategies within contemporary art practice presents a complex phenomenon which is not adequately resolved through an appeal to visual resemblance alone.

Cultural hauntings may be subtle, and embedded within certain concepts, themes, categories and practices, as well as inhabiting particular images and forms such as the found object, the readymade and the vitrine. As the previous chapter has determined, such objects hold iconographical properties recognisable to the (trained) eye, and iconological associations which frame such images within a worldly context. Yet, as this thesis has demonstrated, the cabinet may be perceived to haunt certain less visible aspects of contemporary artistic practice and, therefore, this haunting operates on a deeper, epistemic level than has sometimes been allowed in scholarly literature.

This final chapter offers a brief summary of the thesis argument, and outlines the research findings, outcomes and their significance within the context of existing scholarship. Here, I return to the discussion of categories of practice, with a particular focus on how these are integral to understanding the representation of the world in the historical cabinet and its reappearance in contemporary art practice. I shall also consider how and to what extent the project aims and objectives set out in the Introduction were achieved, and how thesis has

contributed to historical and museological knowledge, before offering some reflections upon the methodological approach. Finally, I explore how this research might be developed further, identifying a number of potential directions, questions and priorities for future research.

## **A summary of the thesis argument**

This thesis began with the contention that the early modern curiosity cabinet is best understood, not as a proto-museum, but as a related set of cultural practices situated within a very specific set of temporal, geographical and social contexts. This historiographical discussion was followed by a historical examination of how the visual strategies of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century cabinet were shaped by the development of certain categories of practice and their application within a world which sought out the connections and relationships between vast collections of seemingly disparate objects. In particular, Samuel Quiccheberg's seminal 1565 treatise furnished a key documentary source of evidence for this tendency, corroborated by surviving examples of cabinets and related material culture from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Chapter Three moved the discussion from foundational concepts to framing devices and spatial practices located within sixteenth- and seventeenth-century art and visual culture. In particular, Chapter Three highlighted the fundamental importance of understanding how any construction is framed, for it is only through the space of the frame that we can begin to 'explore another person's selective interpretation of the visible'.<sup>780</sup> While Chapters Three

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<sup>780</sup> Crowther, *Phenomenology of the Visual Arts*, p. 58.

and Four both investigated how the cabinet fed upon earlier and contemporary modes of representation, Chapter Four focussed on the relationships between the early modern collection and the still life painting. Chapter Four observed that neither the cabinet nor the still life attempted to represent reality, but an idealised construct that enabled the world and the practices of its representation to be studied in detail.

Having thus circumscribed the historical cabinet and its world, the reader re-emerged into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in order to consider how the work of contemporary artists draws upon or parallels early modern visual practices in the manner of the collector of curiosities in Chapter Five. Here, it was observed that the cabinet has been deployed by contemporary artists both as a cultural object and a set of practices representing past and present ways of understanding the world. Contemporary artists make use of the cabinet in a variety of ways, however, and though they sometimes use the cabinet as a reflection upon knowledge, power and authority, they also use the cabinet's representational strategies to create work which treats of entirely different concepts such as social issues.

The various elements of this thesis, selected and assembled, resemble, in small measure, the tableaux of the early modern still life. This work has reflected upon each element and its connections to its neighbours with which I have chosen to juxtapose them, while acknowledging that this is but the framing of a world in miniature. Yet this research has demonstrated that despite being the subject of such extensive and far-reaching research, the historical cabinet nevertheless harbours both secrets and surprises for the contemporary researcher. It is based upon concepts researchers still possess limited understanding of, which it combined in endless ways. Above all, the cabinet as an historical phenomenon

should demonstrate, *vanitas*-like, that the researcher's confidence in his or her theories – the foundation upon which knowledge of the cabinet is built – is at times, premature and always unstable. Simply to ask the question 'What were cabinets of curiosity?' is to mine hundreds of years of etymological shift and accretion, and of historiographic myth-making, by which the cabinet has been reconstructed in theory and in practice to suit the demands of new cultural consumers operating within different contexts.

This thesis has examined a particular specimen of a social and cultural phenomenon, and the difficulties of its interpretation: the intermingling of historical ideas and practices in the present. It has also drawn attention to the fact that such practices are not easily disentangled. The historical cabinet, Quiccheberg's thesis, the still life painting and the works of contemporary art examined here all drew upon a myriad of pre- and co-existing cultural influences, stitching these together to create new forms of expression. These forms and influences were themselves in permanent flux and, as Derrida observes, produce not one spectre, but ghosts unnumbered – ghosts of ghosts.

## **Research findings**

The rise of contemporary artistic interest in and engagement with the cabinet may be understood, in part, as a result of modern precedents, and the shifting nature and increasing porosity of the concept of art itself during this period, hitherto arguably fairly static, its form confined to the realms of representation and mimesis, and dominated by the twin media of painting and sculpture.<sup>781</sup> What is only just beginning to emerge in art history and

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<sup>781</sup> Danto, *After the End of Art*, p. 7.

museology, however, are the multiplicity of ways in which late twentieth and early twenty-first century artists have engaged with the cabinet, and what the deeper implications of these encounters are for the historical and museological understanding of early collections.

This thesis has demonstrated that contemporary artistic interest in and engagement with the cabinet extends beyond the realms of the referential, the visual and the tangible and into those of the conceptual and performative, and that this engagement manifests itself in the emergence of certain categories of practice which connect with the concerns of early modern artists and collectors. Contemporary artworks do not merely echo past practices, they transform them in order to form new relationships between objects and ideas. Indeed, as Krzysztof Pomian has argued, ‘no comparison of institutions can be valid unless it is based not on external appearances but on functional similarity’.<sup>782</sup> Yet contemporary artists do not necessarily translate the cabinet, nor fully grasp it. What emerges from their engagement are fragments of a practice and engagement with the world and its representation.

According to Timothy Luke, contemporary museums are ‘ontologues, telling us what reality is’.<sup>783</sup> This thesis has shown that early modern curiosity cabinets possessed a comparable function, but the worlds they sought to reveal were plural in nature, and tended to be highly specific iterations of spiritual or temporal, Protestant or Catholic, Dutch or German, princely or mercantile. The emergence of specialist branches of artistic practice,

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<sup>782</sup> Krzysztof Pomian, ‘The Collection: Between the Visible and the Invisible’, in Susan Pearce, ed., *Interpreting Objects and Collections* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994 [1990]), p. 169.

<sup>783</sup> Timothy Luke, *Museum Politics: Power Plays at the Exhibition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), p. 220.

such as the seventeenth-century *sottobosco* still life – which revealed a little-known subterranean world to its beholders – also reflected this tendency. However, early modern collectors also sought to demonstrate the relationships *between* worlds.

In Quiccheberg's treatise, connections were made between categories in a rhizomatic fashion, rather than a hierarchical one. Philosophers Giles Deleuze and Félix Guattari use a botanical analogy for describing the structures of knowledge: whereas 'arborescent' or hierarchical structures proceed from a single taproot, or system, which drills down into meaning from a singular perspective, rhizomes are defined by their connection of heterogeneous 'plateaus', or systems of knowledge to each other, in multiple ways, in which no one plateau has ascendancy over the others.<sup>784</sup> As Deleuze and Guattari state,

A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*. The tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance.<sup>785</sup>

This thesis contends therefore that different systems of representation were not necessarily seen to 'compete' within the historical cabinet, but to complement, enhance even complete each other, providing alternative models of looking – a choice of Aristotelian telescopes – in a polytheistic pantheon of representation.

Both the curiosity cabinet and the examples of modern and contemporary art examined in this thesis can also be understood as part of the rhetorical practices of *inventio* and

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<sup>784</sup> Giles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, trans. by Brian Massumi, 'Introduction: Rhizome', in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism & Schizophrenia* (London: The Athlone Press, 1988), pp. 7-12.

<sup>785</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.



*emulatio*, invention and emulation. Just as Samuel Quiccheberg chose to frame his 1565 treatise in Ciceronian terms in order to pay homage to but also to surpass the achievements of antiquity by using its architectural foundations on which to build new ideas and practices, so contemporary artists may be understood as drawing upon the visual language of the curiosity cabinet not to recreate it but to use its visual language in a new way. The issues contemporary artists raise are less concerned with knowledge and power, as they were in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; however, both forms of practice serve as reflections upon practices of looking and representing the world, and as such craft complex allegories which draw upon concepts and practices from other times and places. However, this act of rebuilding reveals a vision not so much of the historical cabinet, but of the perceptions of the cabinet on which they are based. As Derrida observes, ‘The specter is also, among other things, what one imagines, what one thinks one sees and which one projects – on an imaginary screen where there is nothing to see’.<sup>786</sup>

This thesis has traced the reconfigured early modern notion of the category as paramount in understanding early modern collecting practices and enshrined within the physical, visual and conceptual components of the historical cabinet – from the conceptual playfulness of the Augsburg Cabinet and its predicates of love, to the Renaissance and later Baroque tendency of hiding objects and ideas in boxes, and in between layers, which is strongly reflected in the work of contemporary artists such as Mark Dion and Damien Hirst. The work of Dion in particular not only physically resembles cabinets of curiosity but embraces a comparable fascination with the category and with the practice of categorising the world,

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<sup>786</sup> Derrida, *Specters*, p. 125.

together with its ambiguities, tensions and limitations. Contemporary artists thus actively draw upon older visual tropes to ask new questions of representation, using them as mirrors which not only reflect the ideals of the past, but the concerns of the present.

This study has also highlighted the usefulness as well as the limitations, and to some extent the inescapability of the category in historical analysis. As Luke O’Sullivan contends, categories are a ‘philosophical device’<sup>787</sup> held within a framework of understanding which enable historians to approach a given subject – the lenses or spectacles ruminated upon during the seventeenth century. As such, history itself is an intellectual ‘construction assembled from evidence’,<sup>788</sup> and

the identity of history as a discipline derives from its distinctive combination of intellectual assumptions, or categories. Many of these categories are shared with other fields of thought, including science [...] but in history are understood in a unique way.<sup>789</sup>

Moreover, these categories – O’Sullivan identifies seventeen, among which are meaning, context and evidence<sup>790</sup> – are not necessarily distinct. By the same logic, that Quiccheberg’s categories were not wholly distinct from each other is not necessarily to be viewed as either a shortcoming in Quiccheberg’s system, or even a failure of historians to apprehend its meaning, but a reflection of the late sixteenth-century interest in the

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<sup>787</sup> Luke O’Sullivan, ‘Categories of Historical Thought’, in *Philosophia*, 36 (2008), 429-452 (p. 432).

<sup>788</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 434.

<sup>789</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 429.

<sup>790</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 451.

entanglement of things, which was materialised in the intellectual preoccupations and visual culture of the era.

Finally, this thesis has shown that both the historical cabinet and contemporary art evince a fascination with representation and time, with the spectacle, the transient and with worlds beyond the visible. In answer to the question ‘Who is an artist?’, Iranian artist Shirazeh Houshiary (1955- ) has an interesting response:

An artist is someone who is capable of unveiling the invisible, not a producer of art objects. The figure of the artist is very similar to that of the alchemist who transforms base metals into gold; an artist is someone who can put her or himself into a ‘transforming’ dimension [...] Art uncovers a reality which is in the world, but which in some ways is also beyond the world.<sup>791</sup>

## **Contribution to knowledge and research outcomes**

The principal contribution this thesis has made is the development of a new methodological approach to the study of early collections, one which removes the need to examine it exclusively from the vantage point of the post-Enlightenment museum. In particular, this study has synthesised material which has not been brought together before in previous studies and, despite the wealth of scholarly material which has emerged on the subject of the curiosity cabinet during the past two decades, has highlighted significant lacunae. In particular, the question of how knowledge has been constructed *about* the historical

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<sup>791</sup> Shirazeh Houshiary, interview by Stella Santacatterina, in Simon Morley, ed., *Documents of Contemporary Art: The Sublime* (London and Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press, 2010 [1994]), pp. 93-4 (p. 93).

cabinet, including how it has been defined, from what disciplinary perspectives, and for what purposes, has been neglected. Secondly, the study of new ways of engaging with historical collections and how these are accorded significance in the contemporary era is only just emerging, and this thesis has shown how the one practice – or set of practices – may be fruitfully employed to reflect upon the other. This has resulted in a project with a high degree of reflexivity.

Ultimately, this research has built a case for understanding the historical curiosity cabinet differently, drawing attention to the multiple perspectives – disciplinary and temporal – from which it may be examined. Drawing upon revisionist historiographers of the cabinet who identify early collections not as mere ‘proto-museums’ in an evolutionary chain in which the contemporary museum is the finished product, but as independent phenomena which need to be understood in their proper context, this thesis has investigated the concepts and visual practices of early collectors in depth. In particular, this research has drawn attention to a long-neglected historical text, deploying it to foreground the sixteenth-century notion of the category and how this operated in practice.

This thesis has also resulted in a new translation of the core sections of Quiccheberg’s thesis, a seminal text in the history of collecting, which may be helpful to future scholarship, and offers a commentary on the various translations which have been made, emphasising their strengths and limitations. It also demonstrates how this intractable text may be harnessed in order to arrive at a richer understanding of the concepts and ideas which governed cabinets of curiosity in the sixteenth century, and how these ideas survived or changed in collecting practices of the seventeenth century. While a new translation of the

text by Meadow and Robertson was published in late 2013, it should be underlined that this is not a literal translation of Quiccheberg's work, and that it can often be more enlightening to examine the two translations in tandem in order to arrive an approximation of Quiccheberg's original phraseology and idiom.

It is hoped that the findings of this study will contribute to historical research on the subtleties of the cabinet and its historiography, and to the development of a greater historical awareness within the museum space itself. This research therefore has the potential to influence museal display and interpretation, and this more nuanced understanding and historical language may be woven into museum displays in a manner which references the museum's changing function and place in society as well as informing display and interpretative techniques. Indeed, this research is already making a timely contribution to the ongoing debates on the nature of the historical cabinet at a time when many museums are planning new exhibitions on this theme, including the Garden Museum's Heritage Lottery Fund bid for a recuration of the Tradescants' Ark, a project on which the researcher has been consulted.

The 'cabinet of curiosities' is often treated in museal interpretation as a simple, unproblematic, and instantly recognisable cultural signifier. Appealed to as a Baconian idol of knowledge, the cabinet can do little to shed light on contemporary practice and performance, but by examining the nature of its conceptual relationships with contemporary visual representation, and by grounding this in historical research, more meaningful, imaginative and powerful connections can be made in the museum and gallery space itself. If museums are to respond successfully to the current interest in cabinets, it is

vital that the latest historical research be embedded into exhibition planning and design from the start.

By looking back to the cabinet, we can better question the nature, purpose and methodologies of museums today, and invite visitors to consider and question issues of authority and authenticity in turn. This also raises awareness of the multiplicity and complexity of the ways in which we understand the past and create meaning through objects. Thus, while this historical and theoretical research largely seeks to interrogate the manner in which the cabinet has been interpreted, for the reasons given above, it also has a potentially wider application in that it aims to help open the way for richer, more creative, self-reflexive and contextualised displays and interpretation in museums.

## **Reflections on the methodological approach**

As Sarah Pink, a social scientist, observes, methodology is not merely a means to an end, but rather ‘something that should be critically reflected on as a crucial component in the processes through which we produce knowledge’.<sup>792</sup> In order to achieve the project aims and objectives, this thesis has crossed traditional boundaries between disciplines and subject matter, between the historical and the contemporary, between the cabinet and contemporary art and between museology and art history.

This study of cultural practices has greatly benefited from its transhistorical nature, as this has enabled not only a deeper understanding of a historical practice and its significance, but the further development of knowledge on how the past affects the present, and the nature of

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<sup>792</sup> Pink, ‘Advances in Visual Methodology’, p. 4.

its relevance to contemporary society, and to contemporary interests. As Tony Godfrey contends,

A well-rounded understanding of visual culture encompasses both old and new [...] we learn a lot about contemporary art and design from studying older objects, just as thinking about contemporary art and design helps us experience old things more fully.<sup>793</sup>

Each world – the historical cabinet and contemporary art, may therefore be employed to reflect upon each other.

Regardless of its material form, contemporary art may, indeed, as Igor Mitoraj observes, function as a time machine, recalling past cultural practices hidden beneath layer after layer of referentiality. This referentiality is sufficiently entangled, however, that the practices of one era merge seamlessly with those of another in a complex web of associations which eschew neat compartmentalisation or categorisation in the manner of scientific or museal taxonomy. Indeed, it reveals the shortcomings and arbitrary nature of contemporary methods of representing the world. I am not proposing that we return to the methods of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century collector. Yet, I contend that as seeming messengers from the past and present, the historical cabinet and the contemporary artwork can usefully be understood in tandem so as to divulge their deeper significance.

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<sup>793</sup> Tony Godfrey, 'What, Where and When: How and Why We Look at Works of Art', in Tony Godfrey, ed., *Understanding Art Objects: Thinking Through the Eye* (Farnham: Lund Humphries and Sotheby's Institute, 2009), p. 11.

The process of conducting research for this project may be understood as analogous to an ethnological approach which interprets cultural practices as the products of a particular community and its relationship to the world. A museological interpretation of ethnology is provided by Simon Knell, who observes that

The artwork, and all those individuals and institutions engaged in the production and reception of a work of art, might be understood ethnologically as forming a cultural grouping built around systems of belief which are produced and permeated by traditions and performances [...] which reify, consolidate and shape mutual values and understandings of the objects in their possession.<sup>794</sup>

Objects and practices are thus held within a conceptual and performative framework which governs meaning-making and its dissemination. While Bouquet contends that ethnographic research entails learning about a ‘different’ society or ‘lifeworld’ ‘from the inside’,<sup>795</sup> Knell contends that within this kind of research, the researcher acknowledges their status as an outsider, and thus stands beyond the community as an observer without directly intervening.<sup>796</sup> Knell continues:

Our goal must be not to think as participants do *within* the field but to stand on the outside of the field and see it and its participants as engaged in forms of negotiation

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<sup>794</sup> Simon J. Knell, ‘The Intangibility of Things’, in *Museum Objects: Experiencing the Properties of Things*, ed. by Sandra H. Dudley, (Oxon: Routledge, 2012), pp. 324-335 (p. 325).

<sup>795</sup> Mary Bouquet, *Museums: A Visual Anthropology* (London and New York: Berg, 2012), p. 94.

<sup>796</sup> Knell, ‘Intangibility’, p. 326.



and attached to particular objects without them ever reflecting on the cultural strangeness of it all.<sup>797</sup>

In other words, Knell's goal is 'not to study the thing but those who had thought about it'.<sup>798</sup> In a similar way, this research examines not only the cabinet as a material object, or collection of objects, but how the cabinet was – and can be – conceived in different worlds and contexts, by different audiences. By interpreting not only how the cabinet produced meaning, but how meaning is and has been produced about the cabinet, this allows for a 'qualitative depth of understanding' which is lacking in some studies, and which marks the difference between 'observing' and 'really seeing' in ethnographic research.<sup>799</sup>

## **Questions, directions and priorities for future research**

As Hatt and Klonk in their discussion of art historical methods of analysis observe, no reading of a material object, or by extension, a phenomenon, can ever be definitive, but rather complementary.<sup>800</sup> The study of such a vast and complex cultural phenomenon as the curiosity cabinet and its resonance in the contemporary era must necessarily raise more questions than it answers, and in formulating a response to the research questions this thesis has highlighted a number of alternative perspectives, theories and methods. There are thus many more avenues of enquiry which might be fruitfully explored, and this research could be developed in a number of ways. For example, the methodology and conceptual

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<sup>797</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 330.

<sup>798</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 331.

<sup>799</sup> Bouquet, *Museums*, p. 94.

<sup>800</sup> Hatt and Klonk, *Art History*, p. 200.

framework developed during the course of this research project might be applied to the study of other transhistorical cultural phenomena. The research focus might be concentrated to examine a single case study artwork or cabinet, or expanded to include other, non-visual methods of exploring the material expressions of a cultural practice whose human actors, while long since departed, are in a sense, still speaking to us.

In particular, the wider sensory history of experiencing collections in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, lightly touched upon here, might be explored in more detail. The relationship between music and the visual strategies of the curiosity cabinet is of interest, and might be explored further. For example, the Augsburg art cabinet contains a virginal which could be programmed to play several airs mechanically, but which airs did it play, and how were these related to the cabinet's iconography and contents? What was the experience of music in other collections of the same period? As spaces of performance, would these have been silent spaces? The idea of the theatre and theatrical performance permeated the world of art, visual culture and the curiosity cabinet during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and provides a potential lens as well as a subject for further investigation. Such a project would again rely upon interdisciplinary methodologies, which are, as this thesis has shown, of great value in studying complex cultural phenomena.

The strands of enquiry outlined above also lead naturally to questions concerning the cabinet as a vehicle for social performance. Kaufmann's study of self-representation in the cabinet of Rudolf II, and Boström's study of the same in the Augsburg Art Cabinet indicate that princely collectors used their cabinets to conduct business, entertain guests and most

importantly to ‘speak in and through’.<sup>801</sup> MacGregor also considers the fact that for collectors of lower status, the cabinet existed as ‘a social device’ which enabled them to receive royalty and nobility into their homes, and so ‘interact socially far beyond his allotted station’.<sup>802</sup> Thus, through the creation of particular and recognisable practices of looking, the cabinet also facilitated the negotiation of a complex series of social and political relationships between artists, artisans, merchants, agents, collectors, patrons and visitors. As such, it existed as the embodiment of a culture of collecting, its actors and their aspirations.<sup>803</sup>

Another related strand of enquiry is the study of gendered differences in constructing the collector’s persona as expressed through the cabinet. How did, for instance, Duchess Anna’s portrait gallery, aviary and pharmacopeia compare with Duke Albrecht’s *kunstkammer*? Were these ‘gendered’ spaces, and how were they constructed? Was Quiccheberg’s reference to her as an ‘investigator of natural matters’<sup>804</sup> purely based on flattery, and how socially acceptable was it for women such as Anna or Aletheia Howard to collect in their own right during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? What roles did women play ‘behind the scenes’ in the world of collecting?

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<sup>801</sup> Kaufmann, ‘Collections of Rudolf II’, p. 527.

<sup>802</sup> MacGregor, *Curiosity*, p. 66.

<sup>803</sup> For a useful discussion of the reflexive relationships between people, objects, institutions and practices, in an early nineteenth-century context, see Simon J. Knell, ‘Museums, Fossils and the Cultural Revolution of Science: Mapping Change in the Politics of Knowledge in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain’, in Simon J. Knell, Suzanne MacLeod and Sheila Watson, eds., *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and Are Changed* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 28–47.

<sup>804</sup> Quiccheberg, trans. by Leonardis, *Inscriptiones*, p. 30.

The practices of compartmentalisation and miniaturisation touched upon in this thesis, might also be explored in further depth. To the discussion of acts of framing and containment in Chapter 3, for example, might be added the seventeenth-century dolls' house, which would also furnish a means of exploring female collecting worlds further.

Another means of developing the research further would be to conduct interviews with a selection of contemporary artists. This might involve not only recording each artist's intentions, influences and changing perceptions of their work, but also carrying out personal meaning mapping exercises in order to understand how creative practitioners understand and construct their own meanings around historical entities such as the curiosity cabinet. The results might then be compared in order to understand major influences and points of correspondence between different artists and forms of practice.

As scholars of art and culture, the curiosity cabinet is to us a familiar object of study, but as the vanished emblemata of a fascinating and contradictory cultural practice, they remain as enigmatic, and as difficult to unlock, as ever. As scholars, we should not ask how we can 'decode' these practices as if they were riddles requiring a simple answer; rather, our focus should also be on how we can decode the methods by which we produce knowledge about them.

The curiosity cabinet was part of a complex historical, social, cultural and intellectual topography, of which this thesis has examined only fragments. Even so, the influence of these fragments – the cabinet's signifiers or eidolons – may be clearly perceived within contemporary visual and spatial practices in art, the museum and beyond. More than simulacrum, reconstruction, appropriation, or homage, renditions of the curiosity cabinet by

contemporary artists have sought to re-enter the systems of thought by which cabinets were governed, not simply to emulate them, but to gaze back to discarded ways of seeing and to harness these as a critical tool in order to puncture our very own idols of knowledge, representation and meaning.

## Appendix

### Samuel Quiccheberg's *Inscriptiones Vel Titvli Theatri Amplissimi*

Quiccheberg, Samuel, *Inscriptiones Vel Titvli Theatri Amplissimi Complectentis rerum vniuersitatis singulas materias et imagines eximias, ut idem recte quoq[ue] dici possit: Promptuarium artificiosarum miraculasarumq[ue] ac omnis rari thesauri et pretiosae suppellectilis [...]*

*Inscriptions or Titles [Labels] of the Theatre, most abundant of the all-encompassing, universal things, individual subjects and extraordinary images, so that one can also be likewise named correctly: of skillfully-made cupboards and incredible objects and all rare treasures and valuable furniture [...]*

(Munich: Monachii, 1565) [VD16 Q 63, Bavarian State Library, Munich]

Translated by Antonio Leonardis, 2013

<p>INSCRIPTIONES VEL TITULI THEATRI AMPLISSIMI, COMPLECTENTIS rerum universitatis singulas materias et imagines eximias. ut idem recte quoque dici possit: Promptuarium artificiosarum miraculosarumque rerum, ac omnis, rari thesauri et pretiosæ supellectilis, structurae atque picturæ. quæ hic simul in theatro conquiri consuluntur, ut eorum frequenti inspectione tractationeque, singularis aliqua rerum cognitio et prudentia admiranda, citò, facilè ac tutò comparari possit. autore Samuele à QUICCHEBERG BELGA.</p>	<p>P.1</p> <p>IMPORTANT INSCRIPTIONS OR LABELS/TITLES OF THE THEATRE</p> <p>Embracing all universal things and individual subjects and extraordinary images. So that one can also likewise be named correctly: of skillfully made cupboards and miraculous objects, and of everything, rare treasures and valuable furniture and decorated structures.</p> <p>And for these things together which are here consulted to be collected in the theatre, so that, by frequent inspection and management of these things, and individually, some knowledge and remarkable wisdom, can be established quickly and easily and safely. By the</p>
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<p>MONACHII Ex Officina Adami Berg typographi. Anno M.D.LXV.</p> <p><i>Cum gratia et privilegio Cæsareo.</i></p> <p>☿ Hac nota Mercurii, cui interpretis munus assignatum est, utimur, ubi inscriptionibus hisce succinct[c]tis designatæ sunt in altera commentarioli parte explicationes aut digressiones. Quare autem ita succinct[a?]tæ sint ipsae inscriptiones, partim initio, partim infine digressionum indicatur.</p> <p>THEATRI QUICCHEBEGICI. CLASSIS PRIMA. INSCRIPTIO PRIMA. ☿</p> <p>Tabulæ sacrarum historiarum: tàm pictæ, quàm sculptæ, aut alio quovís artificio factæ: quæ in sacro thesauro, quippe ex biblicis, et aliis Christianís historiis productæ, primo loco ponuntur: atq[ue] ita ob eximium alíquod artificium summopere venerantur.</p>	<p>BELGIAN author, Samuel QUICCHEBERG.</p> <p>MONACHII Out of the office of printer Adam Berg. In the year 1565.</p> <p><i>With thanks and special privilege of Caesar.</i><sup>805</sup></p> <p>P.2</p> <p>☿ These records of Mercury, for whom the function of interpretation is assigned, are used, where explanations or digressions for these inscriptions that have been gathered together are designated to another part of the commentary. Whereby however, the inscriptions are gathered in such a way that, partly in the beginning, and partly at the end is indicated by digressions.</p> <p>P.3</p> <p>THE FIRST DIVISION OF QUICCHEBERG'S THEATRE.</p> <p>FIRST INSCRIPTION. ☿</p> <p>Records [tablets] of sacred histories: decorated in such a way, as sculptures, or with other methods created in whatever manner: which, produced naturally out of biblical material and other Christian history, were set/presented in the first place in the sacred treasury: and so they would be very much honoured on account of the excellence of their particular craftsmanship/skill.</p>
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<sup>805</sup> A reference to Albrecht V of Bavaria.

<p>INSCRIPTIO SECUNDA.</p> <p>Genealogia fundatoris theatri:  quæ gentis  suæ universæ, et affinitatis  propinquioris certo  ordine continet enumerationem. Ei  accedunt eti-  am affinium principaliorum, &amp;  consobrinorum  à fundatore honoratorum, arbores  peculiares,  huic principali fervientes.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO TERTIA.</p> <p>Effigies fundatoris theatri,  diversarum æta-  tum: tum et eius parentum,  cognatorum, &amp; quand  oq[ue] antecessorum in office[i]s,  quotquot præcipui  in ea familia vel antecedente  gubernatione fue-  runt: quorum saltem effigies  conquiri potuerunt:  partim pectore tenus, partim integræ  staturæ.</p> <p>A ii Inscriptio</p> <p>Classis pri-    THEATRUM  ma.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO QUARTA. ♀</p> <p>Geographicæ tabulæ: quæ &amp;  mappæ vulgo di-  cuntur: æque universales, &amp;  particulares: marinæ  et chorographicæ. etc. Item</p>	<p>SECOND INSCRIPTION.</p> <p>Genealogies of the founder of the  theatre: it contains in exact order the  recapitulation of which people, in his  universe, and those who have a close  relationship. These are related even to the  personal family trees of the principal  relatives and relations honoured by the  founder, created for this principal.</p> <p>THIRD INSCRIPTION.</p> <p>Images of the founder of the theatre, of  diverse periods:  And then of his family, relatives and at  whatever time of the predecessors in duties,  however many of a particular [kind] there  were in this family or from the previous  governor:  of whom they could at least  investigate/collect the portraits/effigies:  some as far as the breast; others of the  entire stature.</p> <p>A ii Inscription</p> <p>P.4</p> <p>First Class. THEATRE</p> <p>FOURTH INSCRIPTION. ♀</p> <p>Geographical records [tablets]: and of  which maps are said to be common: which  are universal and specific: marine and land-  writings, etc., and likewise principally of  the region or territory of the founder of the</p>
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<p>principaliter regionis vel territorii ipsius fundatoris theatri, tabula prae communibus quædam illustrior, sumptuosior, et magis ampla.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO QUINTA. Urbes pictæ: in Europa, Imperio, Italia, Gallia, Hispania &amp; aliis, tam Christiani, quàm exteri or- bis regionibus illustres. Item fundatoris theatri archipoles, aut aliæ inter reliquas celebriores, aut demum eæ urbes vel etiam domus, quas domi- nus earum voluit honorare.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO SEXTA. Expeditiones, bella, obsidiones, instructæ acies, naumachiaë, pugnaeq[ue] aliæ celebres: vel no- stro vel priscis tēporibus spectatæ aut vsurpatæ: quæ saltem nostris gloriosæ aut merito ob varios quosdam euentus rerumq[ue] peritiam Christianis ob oculos ponendæ.</p> <p>Inscriptio</p> <p>QUICCHEBERGI. Classis pri- ma.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO SEPTIMA. Spec[n]tacula, triumphi, festivitates, ludi, et aliæ eiusmodi ac[n]tiones, quæ usquam</p>	<p>theatre himself, a record [tablet] better [before] than certain common ones more noble, expensive and larger in size.</p> <p>FIFTH INSCRIPTION. Painted cities: in Europe, the Empire, Italy, Gaul, Hispania, and others, as Christian or as illustrious foreign places in regions of the world. Likewise Archipoles [chief places/poles], or others among the more famous ones left behind, or finally those cities or even houses which their master [owner] wanted to honour.</p> <p>SIXTH INSCRIPTION. Expeditions, wars, sieges, armies in battle-formation, naval battles, and other famous fights: or in ours or ancient times, watched or enjoyed: Which at least for our glory or merit on account of various certain events and of matters of Christianity towards the focus the eyes [for viewing].</p> <p>Inscription</p> <p>P.5</p> <p>QUICCHEBERG. First class.</p> <p>SEVENTH INSCRIPTION. Spectacles, triumphs, festivities, games and others of these kinds of activities, which in any place, in any direction are</p>
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<p>imagine aliqua exprimi possunt: ut certamina equestria, celebri- tas concessorum regalium, ritusq[ue] al(ii) veteres, &amp; novi. Item certamina gladiatoria, navalia, sagittal- riorum, ludicra[que].</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO OCTAVA. ☿</p> <p>Animalium grandes picturæ: ut rariores depic[n]ti cerui, apri, leones, vrsi, fibri, piscesq[ue], tàm dolci- um aquarum, quàm marini: et quæcunq[ue] fundato- ris regio profert præter com[m]unem usum memo- rabilia: aut quibus contrà fortè caret, ut ob rarita- tem pic[n]tura in precio habeatur.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO NONA.</p> <p>Ædificiorum exempla ex arte fabrili: ut domo- rum, arcium, templorum, urbium, castrorum, mu- nitionum, ex aff[ss?]erculis, chartis, pinnulisq[ue] combi- nata: ac coloribus fortè ornata. Item naves, vehi- cula, scalæ, fontes, arcus, pontes &amp; aliæ structuræ exilibus formulis proditæ.</p> <p>A iii Inscriptio</p>	<p>able to be expressed with an image: as an equestrian contest, a great throng of withdrawing royals, religious rights some old and new; likewise, gladiatorial contests, naval, archery and sports.</p> <p>EIGHTH INSCRIPTION. ☿</p> <p>Large-scale pictures of animals: as rarely depicted deer, wild boar, lions, bears, beavers, and fish, both from fresh water as salt water: and whatever region of the founder considers memorable besides the common practice [use]: or for what otherwise by chance he lacks, so that a picture, on account of its rareness, may be valued [lit. held in high esteem/price].</p> <p>NINTH INSCRIPTION.</p> <p>Examples of buildings constructed with the skill of the carpenter: as of houses, arches [ramparts], temples, cities, military camps, fortifications, [buildings] combined with beams, sheets, and skirting: and decorated by chance with colours. Likewise ships, vehicles, ladders, fountains, arches, bridges and other structures produced with modest standards.<sup>806</sup></p> <p>A iii Inscription</p> <p>P. 6</p>
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<sup>806</sup> Meadow and Robertson interpret these as small-scale architectural models. See Meadow and Robertson, *The First Treatise*, p. 63.

<p>Classis prima. THEATRUM</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO DECIMA.</p> <p>Machinarum exempla minuta: ut ad aquas hauriendas, ligna in asseres dissecanda, grana comminuenda, palos impellendos, naves ciendas, fluctibus resistendum: etc. pro quarum machinularum aut structurarum exemplis, alia maiora rite extrui &amp; subinde meliora inueniri possint</p> <p>THEATRI QUICCHEBERGICI. CLASSIS SECUNDA.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO PRIMA.</p> <p>Statuæ lapideæ antiquæ &amp; novæ: Cæsarium, regnum, illustrium virorum, divorum, numinum, et animalium quandoque. Eæque tam ligneæ et argillaceæ, quam marmoreæ aut æris cuiuscunque. Item fragmenta capitum, manuum, crurium, truncorumque.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO SECUNDA.</p> <p>Fabrilia artificiosa opera: ex quocunque metallo confecta. ut aurifabrorum, orichalcifabrorum, horologiariorum, ensifabrorum, &amp; aliorum præstabilium artificum, ex quibuscunque metalli massis, aut laminis, vel èsculpendi, vel</p>	<p>First class. THEATRE</p> <p>TENTH INSCRIPTION.</p> <p>Examples of small machines: as for the drawing of water, for drilling [penetrating] into wooden beams, for breaking up grains, for hurling posts, for moving ships and for resisting waves: etc. according to these examples of little machines or structures, other, larger ones according to the code may be constructed and may be discovered thereupon better.</p> <p>P.7</p> <p>SECOND CLASS OF THE QUICCHEBERG THEATRE.</p> <p>FIRST INSCRIPTION.</p> <p>Stone statues, old and new: of Caesars, of kingdoms, of famous men, of gods, divine will, and of animals at any time. And these items are made as much of wood and clay [argillaceous], as of marble or bronze of whatever kind. Likewise fragments of heads, hands, legs, and trunks.</p> <p>SECOND INSCRIPTION.</p> <p>Skillfully, carpenter-constructed works: made out of any kind of metal. As of gold-craftsmen, brass-craftsmen, watch-makers, weapon-craftsmen and other superior craftsmen of whatever mace or file of metal either for carving or pouring for the producing of any kind of art.</p>
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<p>fundendi arte aliquid producentium.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO TERTIA. Artificum opera omnis generis: ex ligno, lapide, gemmis, vitro, telis, aliisque materiis diversissimis. Producentia ex arte tornatorum, plastarum, subtilium sculptorum, vitri artificum, acupiculatorum, textricum, &amp; eius generis alia artificia tractantium, præter superius enumerata.</p> <p>Inscriptio.</p> <p>Classis secunda. THEATRUM</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO QUARTA. Supellex ingeniosa: &amp; admiratione digna vel ob raritatem, vel ob loci, aut temporum intervalla, à quibus petita sunt. Ea vero præcipue minuta: et elegantiori n[on] &amp; aliquando quædam grandior ad cognitionem peregrinorum rituum et operum conducere possit.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO QUINTA. ♀ Vasa peregrina: metallica, figulina, sculptilia, ligneaque, &amp; forma multum differentia, partim ex an-</p>	<p>THIRD INSCRIPTION. Works of arts of every kind: out of wood, stone, gems, glass, the warp and other very diverse materials. They were produced from the art of the lathe, of the modeller, of delicate sculptures, skillfully crafted glass, of embroidery, of weavings, and other crafts of this kind of drawing, besides those numbered above.</p> <p>Inscription.</p> <p>P.8</p> <p>Second Class THE THEATRE</p> <p>FOURTH INSCRIPTION. Naturally suited furniture: and on account of appropriate admiration or on account of the rareness, or the place, or the interval of time, for whom they were made. These that are small in fact, especially: and more elegant and in the end a particularly large one is able to bring about the understanding of foreign practices and works.</p> <p>FIFTH INSCRIPTION. ♀ Foreign vases: in metal, pottery, engraved or sculpted, in wood, and many differing shapes excavated from ancient ruins, partly carried from far away or even in the region</p>
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<p>tiquis ruinis effossa, partim procul allata: vel saltem in regione fundatoris theatri minus usitata. Item quædam templorum vasa, &amp; antiquorum sacrificiorum.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO SEXTA. ♀ Mensuræ, pondera, froulnae, pedes, &amp; geodætica omnia: in diversis regnis a rebuspublicis usitata. Omnino quæ sunt liquidorum, aridorum, spaci- rum, agrorum, fodinarum, fontium, &amp; aliarum rerum. præter mathematica peculiari titulo suo loco recensita.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Inscriptio.</p> <p>QUICCHEBERGI Classis se- cunda.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO SEPTIMA. Numismata vetera &amp; nova: ut tàm Romana illa antiqua quàm alia peregrina, &amp; domestica à proavis &amp; attavis regibus principibus'que causa, ob eorum historiam et insigniā asservata. Sunt autem aurea, argentea, ærea, vel cusa, vel fusa, vel sculpta</p>	<p>of the theatre of the founder less familiar; likewise certain vases from temples and from ancient sacrifices.</p> <p>SIXTH INSCRIPTION. ♀ Measures, weights, arms, feet and all the geodetic [measurements] [relating to land surveying]: in diverse kingdoms familiar from public affairs. Which are entirely for liquids, dry substances, spaces, fields, mines, fountains, and other things. Besides the mathematical things [objects]<sup>807</sup> are counted for the particular label [heading] in its own location.</p> <p>Inscription. P.9</p> <p>OF QUICCHEBERG Second Class.</p> <p>SEVENTH INSCRIPTION. Ancient and modern numismatics: as much Roman in those ancient [times] as others foreign, and domestic from great grandfathers and grandfathers with origin from kings and emperors, on account of their history and preserved insignia. They are also in gold, silver, bronze, or forged or poured or engraved or stamped.</p>
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<sup>807</sup> In other words, mathematical objects are displayed separately to weights and measures. See Meadow, *The First Treatise*, p. 64.

<p>vel impressa.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO OCTAVA. Effigies monetis assimiles: metallicæ, lapideæ, ligneæ, cereæ, gypsatiæ etc. Regum, principum, optimatum, matronarum, hominum bello illustri um, doctrina clarorum artificii probatorii quæ- dam etiam cum aversis partibus, ubi sic fortè offeruntur.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO NONA. Symbolica signa: &amp; illa instar monetarum, sculptilia, fusa, cusa, impressa, ac arrosoria arte prodita. quando cum effigiebus non cohærent, sed earum quasi partes auersæ, peculiari titulo asservantur. ex materia eadem qua effigies, aut monetæ.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">B Inscriptio</p> <p>Classis se- THEATRUM cunda.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO DECIMA. Aurifabrorum formulæ minutæ:</p>	<p>EIGHTH INSCRIPTION. Images very similar to coinage: metallic, stone, wooden, wax, gypsum, etc. Of kings, emperors, aristocrats, matrons, men distinguished in war, famous ones in instruction, of ones who demonstrate with skills each also with different roles, when they are bestowed so by chance.<sup>808</sup></p> <p>NINTH INSCRIPTION. Symbolic signs: and those that have equal form of coinage, engraved, poured, forged, and produced by the art of washing away [erosion]. When they do not adhere to the images, but the ones of these that seem as if they are of different parts, these are then preserved by specific labels. Out of the same material, from which [there are] images, or coinage.<sup>809</sup></p> <p>B Inscription</p> <p>P.10</p> <p>Second Class. THEATRE</p> <p>TENTH INSCRIPTION. Minute formulæ [patterns] of gold-</p>
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<sup>808</sup> Meadow and Robertson suggest these are portrait medallions, which may also be displayed on the reverse 'when they happen to be available'. See Meadow and Robertson, *The First Treatise*, p. 65.

<sup>809</sup> Meadow and Robertson suggest these are 'symbolic objects' made from the same materials as the portrait medallions, but not combined with portraits. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<p>ad imaguncu las sacras, &amp; prophanas: ad altaria, vasa, monilia supellectilemq[ue] preciosam, undiq[ue] formam parti- culatim suggerentes. Inter quæ &amp; ornamentorum formulæ frondosæ, floridæ, belluatæ, conchiliatæ, volutatæ. etc.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO UNDECIMA. Impressoriae cupreæ formulæ: in quibus ima- gines excellentes in plano incisæ, vel arrosoria ar- te insitæ: quæ historias, effigies, insignia, emble- mata, architecturæ exempla, &amp; innumerabilis ar- gumenti formas, pro ingenio fundatorus theatri continent exhibent[?]que.</p> <p>Inscriptio</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>THEATRI QUICCHEBER- GICI. QUINTA CLASSIS.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO PRIMA. ♀ Picturæ oleaginis coloribus expressæ:</p>	<p>craftsmen: to the small images which are sacred and profane to the altar, vases, necklaces and precious furniture, everywhere suggesting specific forms. Among which patterns and decorations there are leafy, floral, beasts, shells, rolling, etc.</p> <p>ELEVENTH INSCRIPTION. Patterns of copper printing in which excellent images are incised on a flat surface, or attached by eroding art: which contain and exhibit histories, images, insignia, emblems, architectural examples and innumerable forms of evidence for the ingenuity of the founder of the theatre.</p> <p>Inscription</p> <p>[...] <sup>810</sup></p> <p>P.19</p> <p>THE FIFTH CLASS OF THE THEATRE OF QUICCHEBERG</p> <p>FIRST INSCRIPTION. ♀ Pictures portrayed with colours of olive trees: <sup>811</sup> each polished by excellent</p>
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<sup>810</sup> Classes Three and Four do not appear as part of this translation, but are translated elsewhere.

<sup>811</sup> Meadow and Robertson translate these as ‘oil paintings’. See Meadow and Robertson, *The First Treatise*, p. 69.

<p>à præstantissimis quibusque pictoribus perpolitæ. ubi in ea arte observetur, quantum alter alterum in rebus ipsis, proportione, gestu, opticis, varietate, parergis, aliisque rebus notatu dignis vicisse videatur.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO SECUNDA. ♀</p> <p>Picturæ aqueis coloribus confectæ: celebrium undique etiam pictorum, summo studio collatæ: ut dum per singulas regiones, singuli artifices inuitati, quasi honesto certamine singula opera, vel libros, qui potuerunt à se confici longè præstantissimi protulerunt.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO TERTIA. ♀</p> <p>Imagines ex ære impressæ: et aliæ picturæ chartacæ in paginis magnis paruisque, per thecas, &amp; suas classes accuratè tanquam in peculiari bibliotheca dispositæ. Apud hæc sunt etiā integra volumina, et libelli imaginum quomodocunque æditi compactique. Suas thecas et ipsæ ibidem sortiti.</p>	<p>painters. When it is observed in this skill, how much one and the other in the things themselves, in proportion, gesture, optics, variety, in the extra-ornaments, and other things seem to excel with dignity when noticed.</p> <p>SECOND INSCRIPTION. ♀</p> <p>Pictures accomplished with water colours: also of common pictures from everywhere, gathered with the greatest enthusiasm: as while through individual regions, skills enticed individually, just as with a work in a single, fair contest, or books, which are able to be accomplished by their own merit, carried forth the most excellence in time.<sup>812</sup></p> <p>THIRD INSCRIPTION. ♀</p> <p>Images stamped out of bronze: and other pictures made of from paper in large and small pages, through enclosures, and their own classes displayed accurately in a particular library. Among these are even entire volumes, and little books of images edited and compressed in one way or another. Their own enclosures and the items themselves were chosen at that moment.</p>
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<sup>812</sup> Meadow and Robertson interpret this as ‘as though artists from throughout diverse regions, having been called together as if in an honourable competition, had produced by far the finest artworks or books they could’. See Meadow and Robertson, *The First Treatise*, p. 69.



<p>C ii Inscriptio</p> <p>Classis        THEATRUM quinta.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO QUARTA. Partitionum tabulæ sacræ et profanæ. Item historici cathalogi, &amp; chronologiæ, maximis tabu lis exhibitæ: tanquam mappæ quædam, non ra rò etiam latè extensæ. Ita sunt etiam tabulæ ramo- sæ, et aliæ singularum adeò disciplinarum partition- nem et principalia capita ample ob oculos ponen tia.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO QUINTA. ♀ Genealogiæ undequaque amplissimæ: regum, ducum, comitum, &amp; illustrium nobiliumque fami- liarum: tàman manu pic[c]tæ, quàm impressæ: inter quas etiam occurrit illæ radices dependentes, quæ in probationibus auorum quatuor, oc[c]to, sede- cim, et sic duplicando in immensum quandoque adhibentur.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO SEXTA. Effigies illustrium, et clarorum</p>	<p>C ii Inscription</p> <p>P.20</p> <p>Fifth Class    THE THEATRE</p> <p>FOURTH INSCRIPTION. Of the classifications of sacred and profane records [tablets]: likewise of a historical catalogue, and of chronologies, exhibited with large panels [tablets]: just as if they were certain maps [cloths], not rarely or even widely extended. Thus they are even branching panels [tablets],<sup>813</sup> and even others of only a part of single subjects and main chapters handsomely placed for the eyes.</p> <p>FIFTH INSCRIPTION. ♀ Of distinguished genealogies from everywhere: of kings, of Dukes, Counts and distinguished and familiar nobility: as much depicted [drawn] by hand as imprinted: among which it even runs into those dependent roots, which according to the approval of the grandparents, great- grandparents and great-great grandparents, are consulted for so duplicating to a large scale at some time.</p> <p>SIXTH INSCRIPTION. Images of distinguished and famous men:</p>
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<sup>813</sup> In other words, classificatory tables divided into branches for ease of reference – see Meadow and Robertson, *The First Treatise*, p. 69.

<p>virorum: maxi- mo numero conquisitæ: ut ii saltem adsint impe- ratores, reges, principes, et alii viri excellentis vir- tutis, quibus memorandis fundator theatri delec- tabatur: quibusue præ reliquis undique familiari- bus plurimum fauebat.</p> <p>Inscriptio.</p> <p>QUICCHEBERGI      Classis quin- ta.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO SEPTIMA. ♀</p> <p>Insignia nobilium familiarum: tùm et arma et Spolia picta ad certas regiones, ac classes officiorum pertinentium: ut procerum imperii universorum, munia imperii hæreditaria sustinentium, ut certo- rum ordinum aut partium ad aliquod regnu, du- catum, episcopatum tanquam insita membra rela- torum.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO OCTAVA.</p> <p>Tapetes et aulea: ea'que exquisiti artificii et for- mæ non nimis latae, sed tolerabilis: quæque ali- quando pic[c]tarum tabularum suppleant locum. Hic sint sericea, aurea, lanea et texturæ cuiusuis subtilioris. Demun</p>	<p>collected in a great number: as those ones at least may be emperors, kings, princes, and other men of excellent virtue, for whom the founder of the theatre was pleased to commemorate: before the familiar ones remaining in every place the ones were selected whom he favored the most.</p> <p>Inscription.</p> <p>P. 21</p> <p>Fifth Class of QUICCHEBERG</p> <p>SEVENTH INSCRIPTION. ♀</p> <p>Insignia of familiar nobility: and then weapons, and spoils were depicted directed toward certain regions, and classes of relating offices; as of universally noble men of power, hereditary duties for sustaining power, as of the reliable order or party to any kingdom, leadership, [or] episcopate attached so as a member for reporting.</p> <p>EIGHTH INSCRIPTION.</p> <p>Tapestries and drapery: and these of exquisite skill and appearance not too large, but bearable, and each one at length supplies the place with painted panels. These may be silken, gilded, woollen, in a gilded warp imbued with colours or depicted with the needle-point.</p>
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<p>et illa quæ in aurea tela coloribus inficiuntur, vel acupinguntur.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO NONA. ♀</p> <p>Sententiæ et gnomæ: eæ'que ad certa spacia theatri inscriptæ: potissimum verò sacræ, vel morales: vel ad classes supellectilis cuiuscunque peruenstè cōgruentes. Harum aliæ parietibus, aliæ in appensis tabellis, aliæ aureis, aliæ coloratis literis depic[c]tae.</p> <p>C iii Inscriptio.</p> <p>Classis quin THEATRUM ta.</p> <p>INSCRIPTIO DECIMA. ♀</p> <p>Repositoria undique in promptu: ad singulas res in se recipiendum aut recludendū: ut armariola, arcæ, scrinia, thecæ, fiscellæ, cophini, calatisci, gradata pulpita, alueoli, cistæ. et in parietibus obuelati forte riscii. &amp; per certa theatri spacia mensæ: itemque arcus, turricula, pyramides ipsa armariola imitata.</p> <p>FINIS INSCRIPTIONUM THEATRI QUICCHEBERGICI. SEQUUNTUR</p>	<p>NINTH INSCRIPTION. ♀</p> <p>Sentences and sayings: these are found in the same fixed space in the theatre as the inscriptions; of the foremost were in fact sacred or moral; or to the classes of any furniture, they are very charmingly matching. Of these other items on the walls, on the hanging panels, some are gilded, others are painted with coloured letters.</p> <p>C iii Inscriptio.</p> <p>P. 22</p> <p>Fifth Class. THE THEATRE</p> <p>TENTH INSCRIPTION. ♀</p> <p>Small tables in view to all: for recovering or revealing individual things in themselves: as little cabinets, chests, boxes, cases, small wicker-baskets, baskets, more wicker-baskets, graduated platforms, bowls, chests. And in the walls, hidden trunks. And throughout regular spaces of the theatre tables: likewise arches, little towers, pyramids themselves imitating chests.</p> <p>END OF THE INSCRIPTIONS OF THE THEATRE OF QUICCHEBERG. THE MUSEUMS AND WORKSHOPS FOLLOW.</p>
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<p>MUSEA ET OFFICINAE.</p> <p>MUSEA</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Admonitio THEATRUM seu consil.</p> <p>ADMONITIO SEU CONSILIUM ATQUE ITEM digressiones Sam. Quicchebergi de universo theatro.</p> <p>Quoniam inter primas consilii partes hoc proponi- tur, ut colligantur istæ classes omnes, cum tota ad- ornatione aliorum etiam museorum, et bibliothecae, obiter iam particularia quaeda[m] subiiciam, quæ harum rerum cupidos, de conditionibus aliis qui- busdam admonebunt. Colligent ergo hæc theatra uel prompt- aria seu conclavia rerum varietatis, quique pro suarum facultatum modo ut eis lubebit. nec enim ita classes proponuntur, quasi om- nes omnia debeant comportare, sed ut quisque de quibusdam, quæ volet, aut de singulis, quæ potest,</p>	<p>MUSEUMS</p> <p>[...] <sup>814</sup></p> <p>P.26</p> <p>Warning and Advice. THEATRE</p> <p>WARNING OR ADVICE as well as Digressions of Samuel Quiccheberg about the universal theatre.</p> <p>Since this is proposed among the first sections of the advice, so that all those classes are tied together, with the entire appreciation even of other museums, and libraries, I will present in passing now certain specific details, which the eagerness for these things, will warn others about these circumstances.</p> <p>Therefore these theatres collect either cabinets or enclosed spaces of a variety of objects, according to their own abilities alone as it will please them. Nor in fact are the divisions put forth, just as if everyone ought to collect all things, but so that each one can inquire after certain things, which he may want, or about individual items, which are more important. <sup>815</sup></p>
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<sup>814</sup> The *Museums and Workshops* do not appear in this translation, but are translated elsewhere. See Meadow and Robertson, *The First Treatise*, pp. 71-73.

<sup>815</sup> This is a key part of Quiccheberg's thesis argument: Quiccheberg is not proposing, as some scholars have suggested, a universal collection: rather he is setting out options and choices for the individual collector to follow.

<p>conquirat. Poterit enim quandoque tenuis fortunæ aliquis, pro loci ubi versabitur oportunitate, proque suo proposito studio, vel diversas species seminum, vel metallorum, vel animalculorum, vel antiquorum numismatum, aut etiam imaginum copiam, etiam sine gravibus sumptibus, sola diligentia inquirendi, &amp; pervestigandi utilissimè accumulare: Divitibus auté et aliis excitatissimis in hoc studio optimatibus, qui iam omnibus inhiant, necesse fuit hic omnia præscripta esse: ut in enumeratione generali saltem nihil desiderare possét. Deinde ita hæc in medium adducuntur: non quod putem ullius hominis, quā rumuis locupletissimi et diligentissimi ætatem sufficere ad omnia colligendum, quæ sub his classibus subinde latius diduci possint: sed quòd voluerim, tanquam Cicero perfectum oratorem ita hæc universa absolutissima enumeratione hominum cogitationibus infundi: quibus magnitudinem cognitionis rerum omnium metirentur, adque res iterum alias animo concipiendas et peruestigandas excitarentur. Censeo enim etiam nullius hominis facundia edici posse, quanta prudentia, &amp; usus administrandæ reipublicæ, tam</p>	<p>For in fact one will be able to accumulate most usefully for investigating and inquiring, with diligence alone, however unimportant or rich the object, based on the place where it was opportunely found, due to one's own demonstrated enthusiasm, whether diverse kinds of seeds, or metals, or animal-like, or ancient coins or even an abundance of images, or without great wealth: for riches or even for other exciting things in this enthusiasm for aristocrats, who now desire all things, it was necessary here to have written all things so that one will not be lacking in anything in the general listing.<sup>816</sup></p> <p>Next these things are added in the middle [emphasised/placed centre-stage], not because I think for any man, that the age of opulence and diligence is sufficient for the collecting of all things, which can be widely divided under these subclasses; but instead what I wanted, just as much as Cicero having perfected oratory, that these things, altogether, most absolutely are poured forth in a recapitulation with the reasoning of human beings; from which reasoning a great magnitude of all things are measured, to the point where the objects again are elevated for the purpose of investigating and understanding other matters in the mind. I reckon even that in fact eloquence can be uttered from no human being, as much as prudence and effectiveness for the administration of the state</p>
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<sup>816</sup> In other words, it is possible for collectors to acquire a useful collection without great expense, but Quiccheberg wanted to include as many objects as possible for the benefit of princely and wealthy collectors.

<p>QUICCHEBERGI Admonitio seu consil.</p> <p>tàm civilis &amp; militaris, quàm ecclesiasticæ &amp; literatæ, ex inspectione et studio imaginum et rerum, quas præscribimus, comparari possit. Nulla enim sub coelo est disciplina, nullum studium, aut exercitatio, quæ non sua etiam instrumenta ex hac præscripta suppellectile rectissimè petat. Iam ergo divino opus esset ingenio, quod hæc omnia sic undique componeret &amp; ordinaret, ut succinctè &amp; compendiose conquisita cuiusvis non impoliti animum, in innumeris instruere possent. de quo tamen aliàs consilium saltem nostrum itidem dare non recusabimus. Hic etiam non refert sint ne loca spaciosa vel angusta, ubi hæc conseruentur: possunt enim in angustis riscis, aut armariolis, &amp; cistellis, convoluta aut complicata multa recondi, quæ alioqui in maximis parietibus expansa &amp; amplissimis mensis aut gradatis abaculis exposita uix locum haberent. Sed et hic meminisci oportet, præter illa armariola, cistas, riscos in parietibus, mensas, gradata pulpita: ad huc multa servire horum usui posse receptacula. præsertim (qui suo loco nominabuntur) asserculi portatiles, cum fossis: item cistulæ portatiles</p>	<p>P.27</p> <p>QUICCHEBERG Warning and Advice.</p> <p>as much as for civil and military matters, as for ecclesiastical and literary matters, as out of the inspection and study of images and things, which we put in order and are able to compare.</p> <p>There is in fact no discipline under the sky, no study, or exercise, which not by its own method could most correctly strive for, than out of this ordering of furnishings [furniture, objects-<i>suppellectile</i>]. Therefore now the opus would be divine and ingenious, which arranges and sets in order all these things in this and every way, so that having pursued this activity concisely and comprehensively the spirit of which is not unpolished in any way, they can instruct in innumerable ways. About which however we do not also refrain at least from giving others our counsel. Here even it is not proposed that there may not be spacious or narrow places, where these objects are kept; in fact they can be put away in narrow boxes, or cabinets and little chests, rolled up or folded many times which other than being expanded along great walls and large tables or displayed in graded mosaics, they would scarcely have a place. But here it is fitting to remember, that besides those cabinets, chests, and boxes along the walls, tables and stepped pulpits: in addition to these, receptacles can be used to serve many functions.</p> <p>Especially (those things will be named in this place) portable beams, with trenches: likewise portable little chests with squared</p>
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<p>cum quadratis alveolis: postea armariola cum valvis: itidemque libri cumualuis excurrentibus: denique turriculata armariola artificii differentis atque immensi argumenti. Quorum fit mentio infra in digressionem classis tertiæ, inscriptionis quintæ: &amp; digressionem classis quartæ, inscriptionis quintæ. et classis quintæ, inscriptionis nonæ. Optimates in his colligendis decebit habere homines ingeniosos quos ad diversas regiones mittant, inquirendarum rerum miraculosarum gratia, &amp; uicissim alii mediocris fortunæ homines huius generis thesaurorum studiosi, noverint quæ cum amicis possint commutare, quibusque rebus aliò transmissis alios ad diversa remittendum possint invitare. Hoc quidem compendio quondam usus est Burgmarus pictor celeberrimus Augustæ, qui unus plurimos optimates ad eiusmodi studia potuit incitare. faciuntque idem Norimbergæ aurifabri, et artifices alii præstantissima varietatis conclavia iam demonstrantes. estque hoc fere ingenium hospitium et ispectorum, ut quando alicubi tam multa videt asservari, ultrò præsentia offerant, et ad remotissimas terras profecti</p> <p>D ii</p> <p>Admonitio      THEATRUM seu consil.</p>	<p>bowls: and following cabinets with double-folding doors: and again for a famous book or an infinitely great fact.</p> <p>Whose mentioning will take place below in the digression on the third class, for the fifth inscriptions and in the digression of the fourth class, in the fifth inscription, and on the fifth class, in the ninth inscription. Aristocrats in these collections will find it fitting to have ingenious men whom they send to diverse regions, seeking miraculous objects in favour, and in turn other men of modest fortune eager for collected precious objects of this kind, and who know what can be exchanged with friends, after which things were sent from one to others for the purpose of sending back to different ones what they can attract.</p> <p>The famous painter of Augustus, Burgmarus formerly made use of this very gain, who singly was able to convince many aristocrats to the study of this way. And the goldsmiths of Nuremberg accomplished the same, and are now demonstrating skills of other excellent room with variety. And it is this generally from the talent of the host [guest, foreigner], and from inspection, that when anywhere one seems to observe many things so, they offer in the end what is at hand, and having set out for the most remote lands,</p> <p>D ii</p> <p>P.28</p> <p>Warning and advice      THEATRE</p>
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<p>aliqua secum advehant, quæ velint contemplatum thesaurum (suo muneri fortè ascripto nomine) decorare.</p> <p>Est etiam quod moneam inter has theatri inscriptiones, et museoru[m] ac conclaviu[m] delineationes, res quandoque admodu[m] late patétes esse, quæ ex suo genere in longe amplissimas distributiones diduci deberent: sunt etiam multa de quibus (artificium colligendi et tractanti edocere) convenerit, quibus equidem nō paucis annis laboris satis impendi, impendamque adhuc si fata aspirarint: ut in plerisque non inanem navasse operam videri queam. Sed hoc huius commentarioli brevitatis minime concedit utendum ergo interim iis libris philologorum qui in prompto sunt, et non incommode officina Ioan, Rauisii Textoris, donec tandem omnium pene materiarum specialem enumerationem suppeditabunt Myriades suo loco nostræ, ubi publice extabunt, Equidem si incipiam à genealogiis principio fere harum inscriptorum positis, monstrabo cer-</p>	<p>they somehow carry with them, whose carefully considered vault (with the steadfast name having been appointed by its own function) they want to decorate.<sup>817</sup></p> <p>There is also that which I advise among the inscriptions of the theatre, as well as among the delineations [sketches] of the museums and small rooms, things whenever they are extensively laid out widely, which ought to scatter the most spacious divisions based on their own kind over a long time: there are even many things for which will bring, it will be agreed (that art teaches of collecting and handling), for which equally in not a few years of work I have devoted enough, and I will devote still if the fates would influence: as in most cases I may be able to appear to be zealous about, not a useless labour. But this pardons to a small degree the brevity of this little commentary therefore for using temporarily with these books of the philologists which are at hand, and not unfortunately in the <i>Officina</i> of Joannis Rauisi Textoris, until finally they [Myriades]<sup>818</sup> will supply a special list of almost all the materials in their own place for us, where they will stand forth publically, equally if I will begin from genealogies placed from the beginning of almost all these inscriptions, I will show</p>
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<sup>817</sup> Here, Leonardis' translation suggests that visitors to collections would do well to keep in mind the collection of their patrons at all times, considering what objects might best suit it. This differs to Meadow and Robertson's interpretation which is based on the traditions of gift-giving and exchange. Here, visitors exchange objects with collectors in the hope of gifting the acquired object to a particular collection. Both are interesting, and plausible. See Meadow and Robertson, *The First Treatise*, p. 75.

<sup>818</sup> Meadow and Robertson interpret this as the myriad books Quiccheberg intends to produce on the subject later on. *Ibid.*



<p>tam eas conficiendi formam, &amp; limites quos sequi quibusque insistere conveniat: in effigiebus delineandis observationes pictoribus non iniucundas à me annotates producam: in aliis alia quædam à me distributa et observata, ad multorum utilitatem, in medium proferre tentabo. præsertim primo quoque tempore quæ de insignibus familiarum armisque nobilium consecutus sum, prius recognita, nemini nobili aut literato denegabo. Sed hæc quidem omnia pro nostri ingenii studiique modulo, nec ultra: omnino vero quantum nos iuvisse potest, quòd post varia musea, et bibliothecas inquisitas, inhabitatasque, post multa emporia, et comitia frequenter visitata. etiam aliquot iam annorum profuit consuetudo &amp; adiutus ad Illmi Principis Alberti Baviariæ ducis musea, et imaginum incredibilem copiam pridem Monachii, et ante quoque Landshutæ consquisitam: quibus certè tam in omnibus studiis utor, quàm etiam sensibus intensis involuor. Nam cum eius generis materias multas, quæ in hoc nominantur theatro, ab eo plane tempore colligo, quo Ingelstadii studiorum gratia versor, cogitoque sequentibus annis plurimos reges, principes ac optimates in fundandis sapientæ theatris, aut promptuariis incitare, iamque constituo museum</p>	<p>the definite form for making these, and the limits which it may be appropriate to follow and to pursue for each; in the delineated images I will produce observations for the painters not unpleasant as recorded by me: in this these and certain other things distributed by me and observed with an eye towards the utility of many things, I will attempt to emphasize [carry to the middle]. Especially first and in what age I have researched about the insignia of well-known figures and weapons of nobles, already recognised in former times, I will deny not at all the noble or cultured one. But all these things in fact for our little measure [module] of ingenuity and study, not beyond: altogether in fact so much is able to have helped us, which after various museums, and investigated libraries, and dwellings, after many markets and assemblies frequently visited.</p> <p>Even some already benefit for years by custom and opportunity to the museum of [the] Most Excellent Prince Albert, Duke of Bavaria, and an incredible abundance of images previously collected from Munich, and before also from Landshut: for which to such a degree I used all pursuits, which I cover with intense feelings. For with many common materials of this kind, which are named in this theatre, I collect from this time clearly, where I am moved by the grace of the pursuits of Ingolstadt, and I think that with many, following years the kings, princes and aristocrats inspired the founding of theatres or storerooms with wisdom, and now I arrange the museum</p> <p>P. 29</p>
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QUICCHEBERGI      Admonitio seu consil.	QUICCHEBERG      Warning and advice
<p>um Caesarum, cuius nuper Augustæ numismatum supellectilem inspexeram visitare, accedit ut apud hunc principem Bavariæ ducem inveniam ea omnia, quæ dudum per certas classes commemoranda præparaueram, quæ etiamnum apud se Monachii regiis planè sumptibus ædificiisque, ut erit alibi dicendum, latè explicantur locupletanturque. Est equidem ab hoc Illmo principe Alberto, præter maximum theatrum, his rerum classibus destinatū, recens etiam fundata Monachii bibliotheca, quæ libraria ducalis vocatur. Est et typographia nova constructa, ad maxima musica volumina, cum Latina etiam grandi scriptura excudenda comparata. Est et insigne illud prælocudendorum numismatum inventum, suo loco conspicuum. Est et proprius locus musicis instrumentis communiter segregatus. Est amoenissima officina tornatiliū instrumentorum, à principe Wilhelmo, huius ducis parente, huic usui destinata, honorifice ab ipso Alberto rebus artificiosissimis adaucta. quæ omnia hic quoque alias separatim, aliàs coniunctim animo concipi possunt. Inter quas varias foundationes sua quoque laus est ducissæ Annæ</p>	<p>of Caesar, whose recent numismatic furnishings of Augustus I had considered visiting, it happens that I came upon all these things at the house of this prince, Duke of Bavaria, which even now at his own residence, the palace of the king of Munich clearly with luxurious buildings, as will be stated in another place, these things are displayed widely and enriched.</p> <p>It is equally by this most excellent prince Albert, besides the great Theatre, with these divisions of things by design, even the recently established library of Munich, which is called the ducal Library.</p> <p>Furthermore it is constructed with a new printing press, towards volumes with great music, with even great Latin scriptures arranged for printing. And there is an insignia that with the wine/olive press visible in that place of the discovered coins made by striking. There is a very place set apart in common for musical instruments. There is a most beautiful office for well-wrought instruments, from prince Wilhelm, parent of this Duke, fixed for this use, in honour expanded by Albert himself for most skillfully-made items.</p> <p>All of which here also, some separately, some together can be grasped with the mind. Among which her various foundations also there is the praise of Duchess Anna, dearest wife of prince</p>

<p>principis Alberti coniugi charissimae D. Ferdinandi Imperatoris filiae, quæ myrothecam et destillatoriam officinam eleemosynis et confortationibus, ut vocant, ex ea regaliter elargendis, tanto ornatu construxit, ut inter splendissimas novae arcis structuras venerint numeranda: ea quidem in hoc imitata Illmi Principis Alberti matrem Iacobam Marchionissam Badensem, quæ suam quandam pharmacorii thecam pridem domicilio suo, in qua viduitatis annos, adiuncta sibi vidua Christophori baronis à Schuartzenberg Scholastica Nothaftin transfigeret, devovisset. In qua etiam ducissa matre, id quoque com</p> <p>mendandum est, inter theatri nostri observationes, eam peculiare quoddam conclave excoluisse, effigiebus sibi cognatarum matronarum, et aliorum principum viroru[m] proxima sibi affinitate iunctorum: et aliquando virginum quoque laudatarum: unde et memorabilis illa consuetudo profluxit, ut omnes gynecei Bavariici virgines, quæ quidem elocantur, aut recedunt simul depictæ conferuentur. Iterumque hic ad cognitionis promptuarium attinet,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dii</p>	<p>Albert, daughter of Emperor D. Ferdinand, who built with great décor a myrothecam<sup>819</sup> and distillery office of Alms and comforts, as they are called, out of these things made to be more widely known, so that among these most splendid structures of the new stronghold will come to be numbered: she indeed in this copy, devoted them to Jakobaea Marchioness of Baden, the mother of the Most Honourable Prince Albert, whose medicine chest she transfixed once in her house, previously, in the years of her widowhood, joined together with the widow of Baron Christopher of Schuartzenberg Scholastica Nothastin.</p> <p>In which even with the duchess mother, it also must be pointed out that, among the observations of our theatre, she honoured a certain, private chamber, with images of wives related to her, and other leading men joined in the closest relationship to her: and finally also of praised young maidens: from where that remarkable behaviour flowed, so that all Bavarian young women, who are found in fact, or move back at the same time depicted, will be raised together. And again this touches upon the cupboard of knowledge</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dii</p> <p>P. 30</p>
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<sup>819</sup> A pharmacy. See Meadow and Robertson, *The First Treatise*, p.76.

<p>Digressio- THEATRUM nes.</p> <p>attinet quòd Domina Anna ducissa, à naturalium rerum indagatoribus, etiam antequam ego id vidissem, celebrabatur, dum in maximo aviario plurimas avium species, ad rerum cognitionem eius studiosis acquirendam, divina alit liberalitate. Nec quidem hæc obiter referens, ab ullo instituto theatri nostri digredior. Hoc enim si liceret, haberem longè alia largissimè comemoranda, sciremque ego facile in quibus adeò vitæ sanctimoniam isthic, virtutesque divinas plurimas commendare deberem: sed iam quæ ad has inscriptiones attinebant, quæque hic continenter spectavi, &amp; planè divinè instructa animadverti, obiter solum ad excitandos alios quoque principes in medium adducenda putavi, donec ad universos theatri titulos exornādos, et in aliis etiam regnis huiusmodi museorum patronos pervestigandos, uberioribus adhuc peregrinationibus, quas paro, me amplius dedam, devoveamque. Quocunque autem perveniamus hoc sane de Illmo principe Alberto Baviariæ duce edicendum nobis, neminē unquam animo aut spe maiora, in exornanda patria Germania, artificiis &amp; doctrinis omnibus evehendis, &amp; (quod ad altiora atinet) Sacrum imperium consillis iuvando, suscepturum, qui sibi non illius industriam, sedulita-</p>	<p>Digressions. THEATRE</p> <p>which the mistress Duchess Anna, as with investigators of natural matters, even before I had seen it, it was celebrated, while in the very large aviary many species of birds, for the acquiring with eagerness of hers of the understanding of things, the divine nourishing liberally. Nor in fact referring to these things in passing, I digress from any institution [plan] of our theatre. This in fact, if it were permitted, I would have considered other things for a long time and to be remembered widely, and I would have known easily as much which things represent the sanctity of life in this matter, and I ought to have indicated the most divine virtues: but already what they retained in these inscriptions, and what I saw here repeatedly, and what I plainly with divine instruction understood, in passing alone for exciting others and also for leaders I thought to focus on these things, until to the universally adorned labels/titles, and to in other kingdoms even of this kind to the full explorations of patrons of museums, for still productive nations, which I am planning, I will dedicate myself to fully and devote myself as well. In any place, however, let us come here reasonably, for the proclaiming by us, about the Most Honourable Prince Albert, Duke of Bavaria, that by none ever with in mind and the greatest hope, for adorning the German Fatherland, with all exalted skills and doctrines, and (because he strives for the lofty) by aiding sacred power with counsels, is about to undertake this, he who for himself will think about the promoting of the diligence, attention, foresight and authority not of that one [i.e. Prince</p>
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<p>tem, prudentiam atque auctoritatē proponendā putabit. Ego equidem ex omnibus rebus, quas mihi hic aut divina bonitas, aut natura tribuit, nihil habeo quod cum eiusdem principis beuevolentia et consuetudine, in quam me ab hinc annis sex hospitem asciverat, possit ullo modo comparari.</p> <p>DIGRESSIONES ET DECLARATIONES SECUNDUM ORDINEM inscriptionum.</p> <p>Inscriptionis vocabulo sic in theatro nostro utimur, ac si quis fortè rex, aut princeps, aut alius quispiam patronus ita res singulas collectas, ad certa loca inscripsisset, aut sic adhuc inscribere deliberasset. Quod enim hic consilium, in his rebus fundandis &amp; ordinandis, dare potui, per inscriptiones potissimum quas unius pro- modum formæesse volui iam [ ]pmisi: reliqua hae supplebunt digressiones. Theatri etiam nomen hic assumitur non improprie,</p> <p>Sed verè</p> <p>QUICCHEBERGI Digressiones.</p> <p>sed veré pro structura grandi, vel arcuata, vel ovali, vel ad forma ambulacri cuius generis in basilicis,</p>	<p>Albert]. I indeed have nothing out of all the matters, which good things, in my opinion, here either divine or natural bestows, when the benevolence and habit of this prince, with respect to which he adopted me as host from six years, can be matched in any way.</p> <p>DIGRESSIONS AND DECLARATIONS ACCORDING TO THE ORDER [arrangement/composition/organisation] of [the] Inscriptions</p> <p>The vocabulary of the inscription is used in this way in our theatre, if by chance the king, or the first one/prince, or any other patron should record these individual collected items at a certain location or if he should decide to record them still in this way. But in fact this plan, in these matters of the founder and of the organisation, I am able to offer, through the most important inscriptions that I want to be just about one of the most beautiful and already the best: these remaining considerations will supply the digressions. For in fact the name of the theatre is assumed to be this not falsely,</p> <p>P. 31</p> <p>QUICCHEBERG Digressions.</p> <p>but in truth on behalf of the great structure, or the arches, or ovals, or for the walkway-structures, whose type in basilicas or</p>
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<p>aut coenobiis circuitus ab, ipsis, incolis vocantur, ad quatuor latera altis contignationibus exstructum, in quorum medio hortus, aut cavedia sit relictà (ita enim Bavaricum theatrum artificiosarum rerum spectatur) ut quatuor maximæ aulae, ad quatuor coeli regiones, latissimè pateant. unde et accomodari aliquo modo amphiteatri nomen ipsi posset. Monere hic oportet Iulii Camilli museum semicirculo suo, rectè quoque theatrum dici potuisse: alii vero hoc nomine usi sunt metaphoricè, ut Christophorus Mylæus, Conradus Lycosthenes, Theodorus Zvingger, Guilelmus de la Perriere, et fortè etia alii, quando sic conditiones vitae humanæ et scribendæ historiæ doctrinam, et cæteras res tracta[n]di ac memora[n]di, no[n] aute[m] spectan[n]di aedificii, et rei, quæin eo agatur, aut proponatur amplitudinem, libros quosdam pulchrè tamen, inscripserunt.</p> <p>In prima Classe. Tabulæ sacrarū historiarum. &amp;c. Inscriptione. I.</p> <p>Præmitto hic sacras tabulas easque selectissimas: sive alicui sit una præcipua, sive duæ, vel plures: ut à divinis potissimum initium theatri vel promptuarii sumatur. Subiungimus autem fundatoris statim genealogiam, et effigiem, &amp; alia, quibus híc aliqua debetur prærogativa. alioqui post classe quinta sequuntur quorum-</p>	<p>encircled monasteries, are called by the inhabitants, constructed with high rafters on four sides, in the middle of which there is a garden or what is left of a Roman inner courtyard (for in fact it is seen in the skillful techniques of Bavarian theatres), with the total result that four halls to a great degree, and four regions of space lie most wide openly. Whence the name of the theatre itself is suitable in any way. It is fitting to warn here that the museum of Julius Camilius in the form of a semi-circle, could correctly be called a theatre: others in truth by this name are used metaphorically, as those of Christophor Mylaeus, Conrad Lycosthenes, Theodore Zyingger, Guilelme de la Perriere and perhaps even others, when they recorded such conditions of human life and doctrine for the writing of history and for the arranging and remembering of other matters, not however for the viewing of buildings, and of a thing which is urged in it, or is proposed in greatness, or in certain books however beautiful.</p> <p>In the first Class, of sacred tablets of historians, etc. First Inscription.</p> <p>I put forth these sacred tablets and these best choices: whether any one may be in particular, or two, or more as are selected by the divinely inspired of the best beginning of [the] theatre or of the cabinets. We add however, right away, the genealogy of the founder and the effigy, and other things about which ought to be considered here in the first place. Anything follows after the fifth class of whichever</p>
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<p>libet illustrium et clarorum genealogiæ et effigies indifferenter collectæ. Pulchrum aute[m] erit in genealogiis et effigiebus, aliisque, fortè rebus (ubicunque demum reponantur) ut principes et optimates, alii aliis suas egregriè depictas, in eiusmodi mittant imaginum promptuaria conservanda. Porro quòd ad totum ordinem attinet spero eum satis plausibilem iudicatum iri: nec enim hic philosophis res naturales omnes ad amussim, cum ipsa natura partimur sed principibus, in quosdam non difficiles ordines, res plerasque asservatu iucundas segregamus. Nec enim iam etiam licuit fecundum VII. Planetas singula distribuere, ut facere potuissent Vitruvium &amp; Camillum imitando cum ordo facilius secundum</p>	<p>kind of illustrious or famous genealogy and images indifferently collected. There will be beauty however in the genealogies and images, and other things, by chance (wherever they are put back in the end) as princes and aristocrats, some for others send their own portrayals of any kind of image excellently done, for the conserving of cupboards. Hereafter I hope that what pertains to the whole arrangement it will be advanced according to acceptable judgment: nor in fact here with philosophers all natural facts with precision, when nature itself is divided but with princes, to certain not so difficult arrangements, we reserve what is pleasing for the things most preserved. Nor in fact now is the imaginative permitted. VII. With the purpose to distribute the planets individually, so that they can be made, imitating Vitruvius and Camillus with the arrangements more easily should the imaginative forms be exhibited:</p>
<p>Digressiones. THEATRUM</p> <p>secundum formas rerum debuerit exhiberi: eiusmodi autem aliquid in libro de insignibus apud colores [s]um prolaturus. aut citius fortè, si oportunū videbitur in libro de facilibus methodis, qui ferè solum ad typographos Europæ instituentur: noverint enim inde illi quoque methodicos indices librorum, cuicumque offerantur argumenti eosque planissimos et utilissimos contexere.</p>	<p>P. 32</p> <p>Digressions. THEATRE</p> <p>I am about to bring forward however any thing of this kind in a book about emblems with a view to colours. Or perhaps more urgently, if it will be seen to be a good opportunity in the book about good methods, which are generally established with a view towards the typographers of Europe alone: for in fact those will have known from this point onwards also that the methods for composing the indexes of books, for whatever kind of argument they are presented with, as well as of the most straightforward and useful variety.</p>

<p>Genealogia fundatoris theatri. Inscr. II.  Iam præcedente digressione de hac genealogia, &amp; de contiguo titulo effigierum, quare præponantur, diximus abunde: sed et alio loco plura de [eis]sdem admonemus: ut classe quinta: inscriptione quinta. Hoc fuit significandū ne si fortè Mercurii ductu, ante tibi occurrente, de his quærereres et tamen à via abarrares.</p>	<p>Genealogies of the founder of the theatre. Inscription II.  Already in the preceding digression about this genealogy and about the nearby headings of images,<sup>820</sup> and how they may be placed in front, we have spoken about at great length: but in another place we advise in more detail about similar matters: as the fifth class: the fifth inscription. This must have significance lest by chance due to the direction of Mercury, before occurring to you, you inquire about these things and nevertheless deviate from the path.</p>
<p>Geographicae tabulae, quæ et mappæ. Inscr. IIII  Hic etiam titulus geographicarum tabularum bis proditur in nostro theatro: sed secundo tantum sub imaginum promptuario: ubi non adduntur mappæ grandes sed solum singulae paginae, ex æris laminis excusæ. Atque hîc rectissimè nobis offertur occasio explicandi differentiam inter THEATRUM, quod infinitum et immensum illud institutum nostrum est, materias, supellectilem, imagines, libros &amp; cætera colligendi: et inter PROMTUARIUM IMAGINUM, quæ est quasiquædam theatri pars, vel museum, vel aliquot arcæ, aut thecæ: quæ continent solum ea folia, quæ incredibili numero ex æris laminis cusa, ad unum cumulum comportantur, et explicatim iacentia fortè in thecis asservantur:</p>	<p>Geographical Tablets, maps. Inscr. IIII  Here also the heading of geographical tablet is produced twice in our theatre: but the second instance is under the store place of images: where large maps are not added but only ones of a single page, struck out of bronze metal. And here is offered an opportunity for explaining the difference between a THEATRE, which is that infinite and immense institution of ours, for the collecting of materials, furniture, images, books and the rest: and STORE-PLACE OF IMAGES, which is just like certain parts of the theatre or museum, or any strong-box or treasure chest: which contains these pages alone, also which in an incredible number stamped from bronze, are arranged into one pile, and preserved in the cases lying open unfolded haphazardly: where however it is permitted for some also to be fashioned out of wooden forms, or decorated by hand: they may not be for the general public or more extensively for</p>

<sup>820</sup> Possibly 'labels'.



<p>ubi tamé licet esse quædam etiam ex ligneis formis impressa, aut manu picta: modo non sint communibus vel regalibus maiora. Quando enim folia locuplete numero in mappas sunt combinata, aut fortè latè convoluta, vel in tigillis expansa, tum sub totũ theatrum veniunt inscribenda: non sub titulis promptuarii imaginum. Itaque sciatur facilé totum promptuatium imaginum ex una solum magni theatri inscriptione pendere, cum reliquis inseritur hoc modo: <b>IMAGINES EX AERE IMPRESSAE</b> tamen meminisci</p>	<p>royals.</p> <p>When in fact the pages/sheets in substantial number are combined with maps, either by chance widely unrolled, or expanded onto beams, then they come to be inscribed under the entire theatre: not under the labels of storehouses of images. Therefore it will be easily known that all of the storehouse of images fall under one inscription alone in the great theatre, when the rest are inserted in this way: <b>IMAGES STRUCK OUT OF BRONZE.</b> however</p> <p>P. 33</p>
<p><b>QUICCHEBERGI.</b></p> <p>meminisci etiam oportet (si eius sit amplitudo confideranda) non minus in toto theatro præstare, quàm si singularis aliqua bibliotheca serviat eidem.</p> <p>Animalium grandes picturæ &amp;c. Inscript. VIII.</p> <p>Fortè mirentur aliqui, quare has non transferam ad classem tertiam, ubi exiccata animalia asservata dicuntur, sciant ergo illi, ibi tantum esse materialia, et ea quæ in cistellis ferè sunt asservanda: hic vero picturas esse in parietibus longè lateque extendendas: ut apud alias magnas imagines, locum suum habere debeant. Caesarum in regnis principium Germanorum, arcibusque</p>	<p><b>QUICCHEBERG.</b></p> <p>remember that it is also fitting (if the amount may be able to be trusted) to present not less in the entire theatre, than if any individual library would preserve the same.</p> <p>Pictures of Large Animals etc. Inscript. VIII.</p> <p>Some are admired, whereby I may not transfer these to the third class, where dried animals are said to be conserved, therefore those knowing that there is so much material, and that these things ought to be preserved in chests in general: so that other great images, ought to have a place of their own. Many depicted things of this kind are seen in the kingdom of Caesar, emperor of Germany, of great men, in the arches, in the upper levels of these very structures and in the halls.</p>

<p>magnatum, multa eiusmodi in ipsorum coenaculis, aulisque depicta conspici- untur.</p> <p>In secunda Classe. Fabrilia artificiosa. &amp;c. Inscr.II. Item Artificum opera. &amp;c. Inscr. III.</p> <p>Monere hic volui posse quasdam quasi perforatas turriculas, aut perspicuos arcus vel portulas, grada- tosque abaculos, diversi artificii inveniri, ut omnis generis artifices, ex singulis quas tractant materiis, sese in eiusmodi differentibus inveniendis exercent, quæ in theatrum, ad certas mensas, aut fe- nestras, circum circa disponantur: in hoc ergo consilium erat me- um, ut quemadmodum de picturis casse V. inscriptione prima et secunda moneo, ab omnibus excellentibus pictoribus in theatrum inserendis: sic etiam à singulis fabris lignariis eiusmodi turriculata scrinia, aliquo ingeniosissimo opere ornate inferri deberent: imo ut singulis ligneis alia quædam differentis materiæ interponeren- tur, ut facta à fabris ferrariis, à fabris orichalci, argenti, stanni, &amp;c Item à tornatoribus, à sculptoribus, à lapicidis, ab acupictoribus, vitriariis, laminariis, et cæteris quibuscunque. Quibus ita ad mensas dispositis, sufficerent instar armariolorum, in quorum portas, ac fenestras, ut ita vocem, liceret</p>	<p>In the second Class Skillfully made carpentry, etc. Inscription II. Again, works of Craftsmen, etc. Inscription III.</p> <p>I wanted to be able to advise here the certain items that just as hollowed little towers, or transparent arches or doorways, and celebrated tesserae [small cubes of coloured/decorated glass], and to discover diverse skills, as all skills in general, which are drawn out of individual materials, practiced themselves in their own kind of different discoveries, which are put away all around in the theatre, on certain tables, or windows: in this therefore was my advice, to place in whatever way, the inscription about pictures in case V: so also from individual wood craftsmen in their own way wooden little towers, ought to be brought to any most ingenious decorated work: as indeed with other things from individual wooden pieces they are placed between different material, as with things made from iron by blacksmiths, brass objects from blacksmiths, silver, tin, etc.</p> <p>Again, from a wheel, by sculptors, by stone-workers, precision-painters, glass- workers, metal workers and the rest by whomever. For those things so placed on the tables, they suffice as a counterpart of bookcases, in their doors and windows, as I call them in this way, it is permitted to</p>
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<p>libros, vel cistellas minores, vel vascula vel statuas minutas collocare ac dispensare.</p> <p>Vasa peregrina. &amp;c. Inscr. V. Ibi dico de antiquis etiam vasis de quibus admirandum est, quanta eius generis ad huc E integra,</p> <p>Digressiones THEATRUM</p> <p>integra, etsi minuta, contigerit hominibus diligentibus comportare, ex terra non nimium maximis lapidibus pressa, apud antiquas ruinas &amp; hypogeis inventa Addo autem ibidem etiam FORMA DIFFERENTIA. ut obiter quibusdam suggeram, nova posse figulina exiguo precio confici, quibus nomina sua vera, &amp; antiquitus incredibili differentia usitata, liceret adinvenire, unde laudem quosque non tenuem in Latinæ linguæ commoditatem, accideret aucupari.</p> <p>Mensuræ, pondera &amp;c: Inscr.VI. Quantum hæc co[n]tulisse in unam capsam, afferre possit intelligentiæ, perspicuitatis ornamentis, quando nova cum veteribus, &amp; nostra cum peregrinis sunt conferenda, cuilibet bono, &amp; alacris ingenii viro reliquo cogitandum. Imo scio multos, eosque privatos homines, nedum aulicos &amp; satrapas in his colligendis,</p>	<p>gather and spread out books, or little chests, or small containers or little statues.</p> <p>Foreign vases, etc., Inscription V. There I speak about even ancient vases that must be admired, as much for their kind as the fact to this point they have survived</p> <p>P. 34</p> <p>Digressions THEATRE</p> <p>whole, even if small, as it will happen for diligent men to bring all of these items together, from the earth having been not too much compressed by very large stones, among ancient ruins and underground chambers that were discovered. I also add however in that very place however DIFFERENT FORMS. As in passing I had suggested to whomever, that new pottery could be made with little precision, for whose authenticity by its own name and by its incredible antiquity used in different ways, it would be allowed to find out, from where I praised and to what I do not lessen the utility/advantage in the Latin language, it may have happened to be sought after.</p> <p>Measures, weights, etc. Inscriptions VI. How much this can be carried together in one cylinder, can be reported for the understanding, the viewing of ornaments, when new things with old and ours with foreign are collected, for whomever the good and remaining man of sharp character can be understood. Indeed I understand many things, and those private men, not to speak of imperial governors in these collections, which are in the entire heading,</p>
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<p>quæ in toto sunt titulo, quæ non magno constent, operã navaturos fuisse: modo ab ullo mortalium aliquando fuissent commonefacti. Ita est etiam de alii ti- tulis quos repetere non puto operæ precium.</p> <p>Numismata vetera et nova. Inscript. VII. Ecce hic titulus, quod saltem ad antiquaattinet, sub quo tot magnos homi- nes noster Hubertus Goltzius, quem maximè imitari studeo, com- mēdavit. Sed ego simul de numismatis novis, nova propono, ãter reliqua studia, gloriã ab ornatissimis et nobillissimis quibusque cõ sectandam. scilicet in numismatis per Europam à regibus, princi- bus, episcopis, comitibus, baronibus, civitatibus cūis: ubi fami- liæ quàm plurimæ et singularii [u] insignia honorarentur, et success-sio legitima constaret: precium quoque accuratius inquisitum, rem orbi Europeo (quantum in hac parte deesse[e]) pacatissimam, et consociatissimam redderet. Qui volet non in omnibus laborare, saltem suae reipublicæ, aut ducatus aut episcopatus exornet.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">In tertia Classe. Animalia miraculosa. Inscript. I. Universa hæ classis,</p>	<p>which are not greatly known, that these works were to be sought after: they were only recently from any mortal finally recalled to mind. Thus it is also about other headings/titles which to recall I do not consider works of worth.</p> <p>Ancient and modern coins. Inscription VIII. Behold this title, which at least is near to antiquity, under which so many great men our Hubert Goltzius, whom I was eager to imitate as much as possible, recommended. But I at the same time about new coinage, propose new things, followed by the path with remaining eagerness, and glory from the most ornate and noble qualities of each. Of course in coinage throughout Europe stricken by kings, princes, bishops, counts, barons, citizens: where/when the insignia of a family are honoured, whether many or one and lawful succession is established: the value also more accurately having been examined, the situation in the European world being most peaceful (as much as it is missing in this part), and it returns to being harmonious. He who wants not to work for everyone, can embellish at least for his republic, the Duke or Bishop.</p> <p>In the third class: Incredible Animals. Inscription I.</p> <p>P. 35</p>
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QUICCHEBERGI.

classis, ab animalibus statim incipiendo, planè est rerum naturalium, et materiarum universitatis. In his solum rebus colligendis scimus maxima ingenia esse occupatissima: tùm in Germania, tùm in alii locis, et non nulla felicissima in Saxonia. Utinam vero aliquos liberalius iuvarent ii qui eiusmodi varietatibus abundant. Quis enim non voluisset Conradum Gesnerum in animalibus colligendis, Leonhardum Fuchsium in stirpibus depingendis, Georgium Agricolum in Metallis describendis, & alios in aliis, ubi quid alicui occurrebat iuvare? quis non itidem princeps, Maximilianum II dum imperatorem, aut Albertum Bavariae ducem eiusmodi ad universi orbis exornandam elegantiam et disciplinas omnes illustrandas conquirentes, no[n] summo studio cupiat rebus apud se passim obuiis locupletare: possunt in hoc (ut dixi) privati homines sese alterutrū iuvare, quanto magis reges principisque: Sumamque ad huc aliud exempli præter nostros Germanos Ulysis Aldrobandi Itali, cuius in his omnibus incredibili numero asservandis, labor semper

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This entire class, I begin immediately from animals, is plainly of natural matters, and of the universality of material things (or subject matters). In these things alone being collected we know the greatest character to be one that is most occupied; then (this is the case) in Germany, then in other places, and not only in happiest Saxonia. If only in truth they would enjoy others more freely, for him who in any way overflows with variety. Who in fact would not want Conrad Gesnerum in a collection of animals, [...] <sup>821</sup> or that of George Agricolum in a description of metals, and others in other collections, when would it occur to anyone to enjoy? Who would not desire in the same way the prince, Maximilian II while emperor, or Albert of Bavaria as Duke in any way, having been embellished around the entire world as elegant and seeking all disciplines to be illuminated, desires not with the greatest eagerness to enrich with affairs everywhere originating from himself: they are able to in this matter (as I said) to aid human beings themselves or another, as much more than kings and princes: I will take up to this point other examples besides those from the German ones. The Italian Ulysses Aldrobandus whose work in all these conservations in incredible quantity always was to me as almost an adolescent for recommending and was recommended:

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<sup>821</sup> Meadow and Robertson translate ‘Leonhardum Fuchsium in stirpibus depingendis’ as ‘Leonhard Fuchs in depicting the species of plants’. See *The First Treatise*, p. 81.

<p>comendandas commendatusque mihi fu-  it ferè adolescenti: donec in virili ætate, ipse eum museumque suum Bononiæ visitarem: tum certè omnia longè maiora, quam ante audiveram meis oculis spectavi: vidique eum in naturalibus prorsus nihil omississe, quin vel particulas quædam, aut exicca aliqua tota animalia, vel saltem ad vivum depicta (ut in piscibus facere consuevit) conservaret. Sed commendent quæso alii quantum ex asservatis alicubi multis rebus, iucunditatis accedere colloquiis principium, quantum lucis harum rerum inquisitorum commentariis obtingere possit. nam multi, qui in eiusmodi studiis versantur, non habent copiam ista colligendi: multi etiam Studiorum gratia peregrinantes, non possunt valdè multa, si modo habent, secum circumferre. Utinam ergo sint plures, qui simul plurima colligere non gravarentur. Ego equidem quàm primum antiquis numismatis aliquid tribuere coepi, etiam à monetis novis non abstinui, sed nec à materiis metallorum &amp; lapidibus preciosis, mox et ab ingeniosis sculpturis, et artificiosis</p>	<p>until in old ages, he himself I visited him and his own museum in Bologna.<sup>822</sup> then in fact all this even greater for a long time, as I had heard before and saw with my own eyes: I saw that he absolutely did not omit anything in natural things, since he preserved either certain particulars, or all of the animals somehow dried out, or at least depicted living (as is accustomed to do with fish).  But I ask whether some things could be entrusted as much from the preservation somehow of many things, to reach the prince with pleasing discussions, as much as he could accomplish this from the light of these investigations with commentaries. For many things, which are approached with studies in this way, do not have the resource for collecting that thing: many foreign items even pleasing for studying, they are able to carry around themselves very much many things, if only they had them. Would that there be more, therefore, those things which are not at the same time more difficult to collect. I in fact began to present ancient coins more than at first, and I did not abstain even from new coins, but I did not wish to collect neither materials made of metal and precious stone, and soon afterward even objects made from ingenious sculptors, and skillful painters,</p>
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<sup>822</sup> Originally translated as Bonn, Germany, the researcher has subsequently changed this to Bologna, in accordance with the known location of Aldrovandi's museum in Bologna, the fact that he did not travel beyond Italy after 1538 (see Findlen, *Possessing Nature*, p. 161), and with the use of several Neo-Latin dictionaries which agree upon Bononiæ as an uncommon term for Bologna. See William Whitaker's Words, University of Notre Dame, <<http://www.archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wordz.pl?keyword=+Bononiae+>> [accessed 26 June 2014].



<p>præsertim semina, legumina, frumenta, lapidumque fragmenta minuta. &amp;c. Nam ad fructus, qui etiam in universa rerum natura, peregrini non pauci acquiri possunt, etiam ex tabernis pharmacopoeorum, maioribus capsulis et asserculis, subinde quatuor combinatis unde quadrati alueoli fiunt, haberi poterint.</p> <p>Gemmae, lapidesque. Inscr.VII. Si quis ignoret, quàm fit hoc studium] refertu[m] omni iucunditate, quamque fit studium locuples nominum varietate, adhibeat sanè haru[m] reru[m] scriptores, Marbodeum Gallum, Pictorem Villinganum, Conradum Gesnerum &amp; alios, observetque quanta illi, et qualia etiam quisque Sibi ex Plinio, et aliis antiquis autoribus elicere nomina possit.</p> <p>In quarta Classe. Instrumenta officinarum: Inscr.V. Equidem hoc seculo in his colligendis, artifices Germani non pauci eò deveniunt,</p> <p>QUICCHEBERGI</p> <p>runt, ut uno portatili scrinio (quod fermè unus homo ferre possit) includere ausi sint omnia fabrilia instrumenta quibus horologiarus, faber ferrarius, lignariusque,</p>	<p>in the universal nature of things, foreigners are able to acquire not a few specimens, from taverns of pharmacists, and from larger chests and from posts, under which four after they are joined, form a basin, are able to be held.</p> <p>Jewels and stones. Inscriptions VII. If anyone should ignore, how this enthusiasm bursting with entire happiness, and how this enthusiasm with a variety of names of places, one could then consult sufficiently the writers of these matters, such as Marbodeus Gallus, Pictor Villindanus, Conradus Gesnarus and others, and one can observe how many of those, and what kind and who for themselves from [the works of] Pliny, and other ancient writers, are able to elicit their names.</p> <p>In the fourth class. Instruments of the office: Inscriptions V. Indeed in this century in these collections, not a few German craftsmen arrived to this,</p> <p>P. 37</p> <p>QUICCHEBERG</p> <p>with the result that with one gate-like case (because one man is barely able to carry it) all craftsmen would dare to include instruments among which the clock-maker, the iron smith, and woods craftsman, for</p>
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<p>quibus aurifaber, coelator, sculptor tornatorque, quibus bractearius, laminarius, bombardarius et alii adhuc artifices non pauciantur. Nec quidem ita ut singuli aliqua, sed omnes omnia necessaria ibi reperiant: modo capulis, ac manubriis paucis ad plurima instrumenta, arte ibi consueta uti &amp; diverse adaptare noverint. Ita decuriae integræ spectantur limarum rotundarum, magnitudine differentium, decuriæ limarum planarum, decuriæque medietarum. Item decuriæ integræ terebellorum, cæstrorum malleorum, et omnium aliorum instrumentorum<sup>[ii]</sup> necessariorum. In quo genere animadverti, quam iucundum sit artifices singulos visitare, eorum opera miranda contemplari, et quandoque nomina, Germanica cum Latinis conferenda, et accommodanda pervestigare. Plurima autem eiusmodi scrinia omnis generis instrumentis infar<sup>[?]</sup>ta sic instrui solere, testimonio sit, quòd non pauca quotannis ex nostris hisce terris in Hispanias usque sic transuehantur. quemadmodum ab Antonio Maiting mirifico studio principibus comitibusque Hispanis scio procuratum. Monstravi autem etiā in his instrumentis, per serinia cistasque disponendis quomodo ex aliquo tali scrinio, aut cista ad miniculo valuarum excurrentium, aut aliarum tabularum plicabilem, omnia instrumenta pulchrè disposita, in momento ad ali-</p>	<p>whom the goldsmith, [coelator], the sculptor and lathe operator, and for whom [the] gold-leaf maker, the lathe-maker, and rifle-maker and others, no few craftsmen still use. Nor, in fact so, as any individually, but all things discover all essential matters here: but with handles and with few palms [measure of a hand/palm] for most instruments, with customary art used there, and they knew to fit things differently. Thus entire groups are seen of rounded files, different in size, of groups of flat sides, and of medium sized groups. Likewise of the entire group of war-worn [instruments?], polishing hammers, and of all necessary instruments. I directed my attention to what kind, and how one might be pleased to visit the crafts individually, and to contemplate the works to be admired and whenever the names, German united with Latin, to explore fully what is to be discussed. Most of all, however, in their way boxes of all kinds of [medical? <i>Infarcta</i>] instruments as I have prepared to be accustomed, that it may be the evidences, which not a few times yearly out of our and these lands they are transported in this way all the way to Spain. Just as I know that these are taken care [of] by Antonio Maiting with wonderful enthusiasm and with his Spanish companions. I have shown however even in these instruments, throughout the boxes and chests, after they were placed in whatever manner out of any such box or chest or in a small degree of a projecting double door, or of a foldable tablet, all instruments placed beautifully, in movement [harmony] towards with a particular wall, or above a table, able to be for use to adapt, and in whichever way a second time in this, equally, suddenly and</p>
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<p>quem parietem, aut super mensam usui adaptari possint, quomo- dque iterum in eam æque repentè &amp; commodè, ut alterutrum mi- nimè fricent hebetentúe, reponi queant. id autem non aliud est, quam ut habeantur valuæ, vel thecæ eiusmodi, qualibus in phle- botomis Germanorum secum gestandis chirurgi utuntur dum quidem theculas libellorum instar habent serico villososussultas, et uncinatis tigillis distinctas, per quæ singula instrumenta ab al- teris modicè seiuncta hæreant, fixaque consistant.</p>	<p>comfortably, so that either are chafed or made dull as little as possible, after I have shown this, they should be able to be restored. This however is not anything, however much as they are held to be valued, either in any kind of box, which kind are used with blood-letters of the Germans with themselves needing to be managed by a surgeon while they have indeed little boxes of very similar little books leaping out with shaggy silk, and separated with hooked beams of wood, through which each, individual instrument adhering, joined by others moderately, remaining fixed.</p>
<p>Tela gentium peregrinarum. Inscr. VIII. Arma refero hic qn[=u?]oque diversissimi et commodissimi usus: ad peregrina cum nostris et vetera cum novis examinandum. Hic erunt etiam E ii illa</p>	<p>Weapons of foreign peoples. Inscription VIII. I am referring to weapons here also, the most diverse and suitable used: to foreigners with ours and ancient with new needing to be examined. Here there will be even</p>
<p>Digressio- THEATRUM nes.  Ill, aquæ ex antiquis monomachiis, et pugnis avorum nostrorum memoria asservantur, ut quidem nihil eiusmodi, etsi dudum ob- soletum, à nobilitate etiam nostri temporis debet ignorari: imo ad omnia tractanda, quàm promptissima et exercitatissima debet inveniri. ut nihil tàm antiquum, tàm novum inter aulicos, ubi si- mul multi habitant, proferri possit, ut</p>	<p>P. 38  Digressions. THEATRE  those, waters of ancient duels, and from fights of our ancestors that serve as a memorial, so that indeed nothing in this kind of way, even if forgotten a little time ago, ought to be ignored by the nobility even of our own time: on the contrary all things need to be managed, which most quickly and expertly ought to be discovered. As there is nothing as ancient as novel within the princely halls, where at the same time many live, and can be mentioned, so that those things may not be</p>

<p>no[n] assint, qui ex quolibet genere aliquid saltem pertrac[e]tarint, usurparuntque. equidem in his ipsis nihil fuerit tàm rarum, tamque peregrinum, quod novisse no[n] suam quoque afferet utilitatem. Iaculandi aute[m] ars nunquam debet præteriri: in qua ex promptuario nostro invenies, neque id omnino novum: et ex balistis globos, et è contrario ex bombardulis Sagittas, in suum quondam usum, iaculari quosdam adinvenisse et introduxisse.</p> <p>Vestitus peregrii. Inscr. X. Ibi admoneo etiam minutarum formularum, instar puparum: quales solent inter se reginæ ac principes, ad peregrinas vestes exterarum nationum pulchrè examinandas, aliæ aliis transmittere, cum quibus quandoque ipsi gentium mores occurrunt observandi: dum in iis pupis exprimitur: quis habitus domi, forisque: quid hyeme, &amp; æstate: quis in templis, &amp; conviviis: quis nuptiali, aut lugubri tempore: præsertim à nobilissimis adhibeatur. Accidit et vestitū domesticum, apud principum filias, sibi usitatum in memoriam quandam diuturnam minutis formulis asservari: cuius generis quidem, cum exili et plurima argentea supellectile, habebantur apud Dominae Annæ ducissæ Baviaræ et Alberti sui charissimi coniugis filias, Mariam, &amp; Mariam, Maximilianam, aliquot centuriæ, et maio-</p>	<p>present, anything of the kind at least that can be managed and used. Equally with these very items nothing had been so rare, and so foreign, which their use is not able to be even conveyed. However the art of throwing javelins never ought to be left out: in our storerooms in which you make discoveries, nor [is] it entirely new: and of the cannonballs from the ballistas, and from the opposing arrows from the little bombadiers, those things which each used formerly used as their own [methods], you will discover that you have learned and been introduced to what each used to throw.</p> <p>Foreign articles of clothing: Inscriptions X Here I give advice about even miniature formulas/designs, similar to those of dolls: which the queens and princes themselves are used to, needing to examine the beauty of foreign clothing from far away nations, some going across to others, with which when these customs of the people happen to be observed: while in these dolls it is expressed: what outfit at home and away from home: what in the winter and in the summer: what in the temples and while dining/socializing: what in marriage, or during times of mourning: and what especially is adhered to by the most noble. It happens that in domestic dress, among the daughters of princes, it is usual too for they themselves in memory of time long ago, it is usual for these customs with miniature designs to be observed: of which kind indeed, with a small furnishing and great deal of silver, they are kept at the house of Her Highness Anna, Duchess of Bavaria and Albert, and of her dearest husband, these daughters, including Maria and Maria, Maximiliana, numbering a</p>
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<p>re adhuc numero, apud neptes ducissæ matris, ex Mechilde filia marchionaissa Badense, Iacoben et Salomen, quæ domesticorum officiorum et actionum tanto ordine distinguuntur, ut quisque singula inspiciens, omnia regiæ cuiusdam conclavia, et pompas aulicosque mores ad unguem tenere videatur. Sed &amp; peregrinorum telarum particulis assevandis licebit aliquos inter hæc delectari.</p> <p>In</p> <p>QUICCHEBERGI</p> <p>In quinta Classe. Picturæ oleaginis coloribus. Item Picturæ aqueis coloribus. Inscr. I. et. II. Non debet hic præteriri, quin edoceantur optimi patroni, quantopere suum in honorandis illustribus picturis amorem declaraverit Wilhelmus Bavarix dux pater ducis Alberti prudentissimus, et pacis amantissimus princeps. nam in hortu suum Monachiensem maiorem, præstantissimorum in Germania pictorum, singula opera mirificè eorum ingeniis excitis, dum singulis certatum tabellarum magnitudinem transmittit, contentione quadam honesta pingi curavit, quas adhuc quidem summa cum veneratione homines peregrini, Monachium summo cum desiderio,</p>	<p>hundred, and still more in numbers, among the granddaughters of the Duchess mother, whose domestic duties and accomplishment are recognized with a great rank, so that inspecting each one individually, every chamber of a certain queen, and the processional and customs of the lesser halls [of the palace] are seen “to the nail/claw” [i.e., precisely]. But even after particular weapons of foreign peoples have been surveyed, it will be even be able to be delighted by any of these.</p> <p>P. 39</p> <p>QUICCHEBERG</p> <p>In the Fifth Class. Pictures in olive colours. Similarly, Pictures in water colours. Inscriptions I and II. It ought not to be omitted, since the best patrons are taught, as much in for the sake of honouring himself, Wilhelm of Bavaria had declared his love for celebrated paintings, the father leader of Duke Albert, most prudent, and prince of most-loved peace. For in his garden at Greater Munich, after he was excited by the ingenuity of the most famous paintings of Germany, by each wonderous work of these artists, while he transmitted individually, a great number of contested tablets, he took care that each was painted with care and respect, tablets which still indeed [instill] foreign peoples with the greatest veneration, with the greatest desire for Munich, [and which they] contemplate and dream about bringing back from this lovely city. And so</p>
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<p>ob urbis amoenitatem perlati, contemplantur admiranturque. Atque ita amor ille rerum præstantissimarum artificiosarumque propogatus est etiam in eius filios, atque nepotes: hos autem nepotes ne hoc loco præteream, duces inquam Wilhelmum, Ferdinandum, et Ernestum, ut omnibus rebus aliis, quæ principes regiæ virtutis observantissimos, Ingenio excitatissimos sequi decet. ita et literarum et doctissimarum picturarum promotores benignos, summopere debeo hac ætate admirari atque laudare: cuius rei certissimum exemplum extitit, quod ipse dux Wilhelmus virtutum præstantia, et corporis, iam statura heros eximius, sua manu, stylo celerrimo, etiam ferè ante adhibitum magistrum, ornatè pugnas exemplaue historica præstantissima pingeret, et in cupreis laminis exararet. Quem quia strenue in omni exercitatione liberalissima et celsissimi animi conatibus imitantur eiusdem fratres, maximè Ferdinandus geographicis, Ernestus sacris diligentius in vigilando, dignum est, ut omnes imperii principes ipsi Alberto tanto parenti, tantos filios summè gratulentur.</p> <p>Imagines ex ære impress. Inscr. III.</p> <p>Ignorabunt fortè aliqui studiosi, harum peculiarem solere instrui bibliothecam quam promptuarium imaginum vocari receptum est, id er-</p>	<p>that love for the most excellent and skillfully made things was carried on also in his children and grandchildren: may I also not neglect to mention these grandchildren in this place, the Dukes, I quote, Wilhelm, Ferdinand and Ernest, as with all other matters, when most highly observing the leaders of regal virtue, it is fitting to follow the exhortations with virtue. And thus, the benevolent promoters of most expert literature and paintings, I very much ought to, in this age, admire and praise: whose example of the most reliable matter he shows, because he himself, the leader Wilhelm of excellent virtue, and of body, an extraordinary, heroic stature, in his hand, most celebrated style, and almost even standing out before a master/teacher, he paints battles and historical model-events in a most excellent manner, and even engraves on copper sheets. For which reason his brothers energetically imitate him, with attempts, since his work is accomplished with every most honourable and lofty skill, the great geographer Ferdinand and Ernest, more diligent in paying attention to sacred matters, and it is appropriate that all princes of the empire to such a great father Albert himself, they are thankful for so many children to the greatest degree.</p> <p>Images struck out of bronze. Inscriptions III.</p> <p>Some scholars will perhaps be unaware, that it is accepted that the particular type of these items is accustomed in practice to be called as much a library of images as a storehouse of images, and this fact</p>
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<p>go iam ex subsequentibus titulis sunt deprehensuri. Quamvis ut facere</p> <p>Digressio- THEATRUM nes.</p> <p>facere solent perspicacissimi &amp; prudentissimi quique, non in libros illa compingunt, quæ in suo genere magnis paginis sola imprimuntur, sed perpetuo locupletando, in latissimis thecis expansa, sub certis suis titulis conservant, ut intra solutas membranas suis inscriptionibus distinctas, non aliter ac singulos libros continent. ac tantum &amp; quibus non est animus sua amplius locupletare, semel certis classibus annumerata, et co[m]pacta in libris inter hæc reponunt. Subinde ergo huius instituti fasciculi et materiæ à diligentioribus patronis adeò augentur, ut quam plurimarum disciplinarum ex his solum imaginibus cognitio acquiri posse videatur, plus enim quandoque præstat memoriæ inspectio solum aliquius picturæ quam diuturna lectio multarum paginarum. Multum ergo paulatim per has literis commodabitur, si modo sic pergant Belgici atque alii pictores atque sculptores orbem nostrum suis operibus locupletare. Ut autem hic ad omnium eorum qui hæc colunt, utilitatem liberius digrediamur. picturas omnes hactenus</p>	<p>therefore is now about be revealed from the following titles. Although as they are accustomed to make</p> <p>P. 40</p> <p>Digressions. THEATRE</p> <p>the most keen and wise also, they paint those things not in books, which they print in their own style with not only more pages, but also enriched without interruption, having been expanded in the widest box, preserved under definite titles of their own, so that within an unrestrained membrane of its own separated by inscriptions, they contain nothing other than individual books. And as much and for which it is not in their spirit to enrich to a larger degree, at the same time number by definite categories/classes, and joined together they put these things back into the books. Thereupon therefore it is even increased by more diligent patrons of this plan of packets and material, with the result that from these images alone it seems as if one is able to acquire knowledge, more in fact the inspection presents the memory of a certain picture more lasting than a reading of many pages. Therefore little by little it will be provided through these letters, if only the Belgians and other painters and sculptors enrich our world with their works. In order that however here to all of these who manage these things, freedom is separated from utility, we have distributed in this way those titles and all pictures to this place in these areas.</p>
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<p>in regiones &amp; titulos suos sic distribuimus. In prima regione fu[i?]:</p> <p>Primo Biblicæ historiae. II. Novi testamenti historiae. III. Apostoli &amp; Evangelistæ. IIII Sancti et sanctæ. V. Theologicæ inventiones. VI. Christianorum historiae. VII Miracula. VIII Expeditiones. IX. Effigies. X. Genealogiæ. In Secunda regione sunt: Primo naturalia. I. animalia, stirpes, anatomica &amp;c. II. Philosophicæ inventiones. III Disciplinarum &amp; mathematicæ, artificiorum chartæ IIII Musicæ chartæ. V. Historiæ a[n]tiquæ profanæ. VI. Poëtica et amores deorum. VII Ludicra et impudica. VIII Spectacula et triumphus antiqua pleraque. IX Ritus novi: venationes, gestus, festa, exercita gladiatorum, et artificum diversorum. X. Vestitus &amp; habitus picti. XI Insignia familiarum. In tertia regione sunt: Primo Geographicæ chartæ. II Prospectus regionum III. Urbes pictæ. IIII AEdificia et architectura. V. Antiqua monumenta. VI. Numismata antiqua et nova VII. Machinæ et naves. VIII. Fabrilia IX. Supellex varia X. Vascula atque hæc omnia picta. XI. Ornamentorum formulæ. diversissime etiam pictæ. Hac[?]tenus tituli principales: sed multi</p>	<p>In the first area there was: First [I] of Biblical History; II The New Testament of History; III of Apostles and Evangelists; IIII. Of Saints and female Saints; V. Theological discoveries; VI. Of the history of the Christians; VII. Miracles; VIII. Expeditions; IX. Effigies; X. Genealogies.</p> <p>In the second area there are: First natural matters; I. Animals, plants, anatomy, etc. II. Discoveries of Philosophy; III. Of Disciplines and Mathematics, [and] books of Arts; IIII [...].<sup>823</sup> V. of the History of Ancient Profane; VI. Poetry and Love stories of the gods. VII. Sport and the Shameless/Unchaste VIII. Ancient Spectacles and Triumphs and more. IX. New Rites: hunts, movement, holidays, gladiatorial training, and different skills; X. Pictures of clothing and other habits; XI Family Insignias;</p> <p>In the third area there are: First, Geographic charts/maps; II. Views of the Regions; III. Pictures of Cities; IIII. Buildings and Architecture; V. Ancient Monuments; VI. Ancient and modern coins [numismatics]; VII. Machines and ships; VIII. Carpentry; IX. Various furniture; X. Vases and all these Paintings; XI. Decorative Patterns and also very diverse paintings;</p> <p>Thus-far mentioned titles of Princes:</p>
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<sup>823</sup> Meadow and Robertson translate 'Musicæ chartæ' as 'musical scores'. See *The First Treatise*, p. 86.

<p>QUICCHEBERGI</p> <p>multi in species, atque adeo nobis in thecas plures subducuntur. nam biblicorum facio satis grandes sectiones tres, aut quatuor: dividendo in biblica priora, biblica media, biblica postrema, et biblica in libris singulis separatim editis. Sic divido novi testamenti imagines in Nativitatis picturas, et ei proximas: in evangelia: in passionem, et passionem secuta: demum in acta Apostolorum, et apocalypsim postmodum sunt apud Apostolos et Evangelistas formulæ etiam Salvatoris, Trinitatis &amp; Mariæ apotheosis. Item sic divido Geographicas chartas, nec quidem impedire quenquam debet, quod sint segregatæ hic grâdes mappæ, quæ in tigillis expansæ parietibus fortè appenduntur, aut aliàs maximævolutæ apparent cum illæ in peculiari inscriptione theatri maneāt, divido inquam has in Universales, in Marinas, in Europeas, in Germanicarum regionum chartas, in regnorum tabellas, ut Italiæ, Galliæ, Hispaniæ, Angliæ, &amp;c. Ubi sub s[?]uis undique regnis etiam adiunctæ insulæ intelliguntur. Ornamenta quque divido in thecas plures: ut in ornamenta dicta Frondosa: ut in Ornamenta dicta Compartimenta: ornamenta dicta Grotesca,</p>	<p>P. 41</p> <p>QUICCHEBERG</p> <p>but many in appearance, and as much as for us in the numerous boxes are places, for I sufficiently make the library into three large sections or four: dividing it into early biblical, middle biblical and later biblical, and book biblical with books having been edited individually separately. Thus I divide images of the new testament in pictures of nativity, and close to it, in the gospels: into the passions, and following the passions: finally into the Acts of the Apostles, and the Apocalypse a little after are with the Apostles and Gospels, formulas even of Saviours, Trinities and the Apotheosis of Mary, again so I divide Geographic papers, not indeed to hinder whatever it ought to [is destined to], since there may be removed steps/grades of the map, which are hung by chance on tiles spread across the walls, or the rolls make the others greatly visible since those remained in specific inscriptions of the theatre, I divide these, I quote, into Universals, Seas, Europes, on charts of the German regions, in tablets of kingdoms. As of Italy, Gallia, Hispania, England, etc.</p> <p>Whereby with these kingdoms everywhere even islands are understood to be included. I also divide decorations in these numerous boxes: so that leafy among the decorations are named: so that compartments are named among the decorations: Grotesques are included in decorations: Beast-related</p>
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<p>Ornamenta dicta Belluata. Item alia tropheata, fruticosa, mixta. &amp;c. quomodo saltem divisi inter imagines Illmi principis Alberti Bavariae ducis, qui horum omnium maximam copiam pridem Adhibito Mathia Schalling conquisivit. Ita de urbibus pictis facile est ei, qui colligit quæ usquam prodeunt omnia, animadvertere, quòd thecas faciant plures: quas ad rationem Geographicarum chartarum pul[c]h[?]rè noverit separare.</p> <p>Genealogiæ undequaeque amplissimæ. Inscr. V. Si quis hic fortè ambigat, quare iterum genealogiæ ponantur, cum iam ante classe prima occurrerint aliquæ: &amp; aliæ iterum no- minentur in toto imaginum promptuario, sub inscriptione tertia classis primæ: ubi sunt: IMAGINES EX AERE IMPRES.</p> <p>SAE. Sciatur de priore inscriptione rationem reddi in digressionem omnium prima. sub titulo TABULAE SACRARUM &amp;c. De eo vero quòd inter titulos promptuarii imaginum ex aeris F laminis</p> <p>Digressio- THEATRUM nes.</p> <p>Laminis cusarum, etiam genealogiæ ponuntur: sciendum est: ea solum ibi locum habere, quæ inter solida folia explicatim iacentia</p>	<p>patterns are included among the ornaments. Likewise, other Crosses and fruit-related images, mixed ones, etc., just as, at least, they are divided between images of the Most Illustrious Prince Albert, Duke of Bavaria, who conquered the greatest prize of all things after employing Mathia Shalling. Thus, it is easy for him with painted cities, who keeps together all things which extends everywhere, to notice what boxes should make the most things: which according to the reason of Geographic charts he knew to separate by beauty.</p> <p>The Most famous Genealogies from everywhere, Inscription V. If anyone here by any chance should dispute, from where again genealogies are placed, since now before the first class anything should come to mind: and others again are named in the entire storeroom of images, under the third inscription of the first class: where there are: Images Struck from Bronze.</p> <p>It is known that from the prior inscription the reason is delivered in the first digression of all things. Under the title Sacred Tablets, etc., about this in truth the titles of the storehouse of images from bronze sheets of stricken metal,</p> <p>P. 42</p> <p>Digressions. THEATRE</p> <p>even the genealogies are placed: it must be known that: these things alone there have a place, which in between solid foliage little by little are distributed lying flat. The</p>
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dispensantur. reliqua enim quæ combinantur. vel in tigillis expā-  
dūtur vel in longis volutis  
recondūtur, referri rectissimè ad totū  
theatrum. Similis est ratio  
Geographicarum mapparum, apud  
quas etiam hoc ferè modo, sed latius  
sum digressus: quod etiam à  
me petitū fuit, superioribus annis  
cum in aliis locis tūm Venetiis  
ubi viri docti manuscriptum  
exemplar theatri nostri  
co[n]spexerunt.

Insignia nobilium familiarum. Inscr.  
VII. De his  
admonebo alio loco, quomodo per  
singulos imperii circulos, et  
ducatus, archiepiscopatus, &c.  
familiarum insignia colligi debe-  
ant: cuius rei interim exemplum sit  
præter ea, quæ ad latera in ge-  
ographicis mappis aut calendariis  
quandoque apponuntur, perve-  
nsutè in Belgio ædita aquila imperii  
membrorum insignia conti-  
nens. ex æreis formis impressa, Item  
Hannoniæ procerum et no-  
bilitatis universæ insignia in  
latissima charta ex ære impressa:  
Wirzburgensium nobelium seu  
Francnoïæ Orientalis charta  
minus lata. Maiori iterum forma  
extant nobiles quondam tabulæ  
rotundæ apud Angliæ regem, cum  
insignibus annotati, quam so-  
lum à Petro Obernburger Alberti  
principis consilario antiquissi-  
mam nancisci potui Laudabilis in  
hoc studio irrepsit consuetudo  
insignia amicorum cum inscriptis  
symbolis in certis quibusdam li-

remaining in fact are those that are  
combined. They are spread out either on  
tiles or hidden away in long rolls, to be  
redirected properly to the whole theatre. It  
is similar to the rationale for Geographic  
maps, among which his is barely the way,  
but I digress widely: because there was  
even by my own entreaty, from the greatest  
years with in other places then in Venice  
where learned men examined a manuscript  
copy of our theatre.

Insignia of Noble Families. Inscription  
VII.  
I will advise about these things in another  
place, in what way through each circle of  
the empire, and leadership, archbishop,  
etc., and insignia of families ought to be  
collected: of which matter meanwhile there  
may be an example besides this, which are  
placed next to geographic maps or  
calendars, in very old temples in Belgium  
containing the Eagle seal of the members  
of the empire. Stamped from the bronze  
forms, even the Chiefs of Hannonia and of  
the insignias of the universal nobility  
which are stamped on the widest charts out  
of bronze: whether of the Wirzburgen  
nobility or of Eastern Franconian less wide.

The major form again appears among  
formerly the round table of the king of  
Anglia, when after having been made  
famous with insignia, which I am only able  
to acquire the most ancient from Peter  
Obernburger counsellor of prince Albert  
with praises in this study he insinuates  
himself into the customary insignia of  
friends with symbols inscribed in certain  
little books for anyone to collect: and I

<p>bellis colligere: &amp; quidem meas chiliades insignium ex eiusmodi libris sæpe adauxi, ut hic nuper quoque egregiè ex libello Heinrichi à Taufkircha in Hoherain nobilissimi viri, cum ex Gallia in patriam Bavariam rediisset. in quo utinam reliquam nobilitatem, quæ quandoque torpet otio, satis foeliciter incitare possem.</p> <p>Sententiæ et Gnomæ. Inscript. IX. In his passim inscribendis velim Germanos heroes paulo esse liberaliores. cum in eis maiestas aliqua esse possit, præter alia commoda multa. Si qui ergo non noverint Romanarum antiquitatum diversi usus inscriptiones</p> <p>QUICCHEBERGI</p> <p>imitari, quæ singulæ offerunt certè in suo genere aliquid accuratum, sequantur sanè philosophos, &amp; scriptores divinos plurimos, qui non obscurè in vitæ disciplina innumera ad hoc fuggerere: aut imitentur eos, qui in monasteriis undique ad postes sententias inscribere consueverunt. item præceptores Bohemos, qui natura structuræ suæ moniti scholarum &amp; conclavium undique maceratas trabesque, tigillis levigant, inque earum patulis imaque solidatis commissuris undique sententias maxima</p>	<p>increased my chiliad [group of 1000] insignia out of this sort often from books, so that here recently also out of the excellent book of Heinrich A Taufkircha in Hoherain, a most noble man, when he had returned from Gallia to the fatherland, Bavaria. In which would that I left out the nobility, who whenever they are numb with leisure, I am able to sufficiently incite happiness.</p> <p>Opinions and Sayings. Inscriptions IX. In these everywhere from what is to be written down I wish there to be a little more about German heroes. Since in majestic things anything is possible, besides many other advantageous matters. If anyone therefore is not knowledgeable of the diverse uses to imitate the inscriptions of Roman antiquities,</p> <p>P. 43</p> <p>QUICCHEBERG</p> <p>which individually offer in fact in their own kind any kind of attentions, followed sensibly by philosophers and many divine writers, who did not flee from obscurity in the innumerable disciplines of life to this point: or imitate those ones, who in monasteries everywhere learn to inscribe opposite opinions. Likewise, Bohemian teachers, who having taught the nature of their own structures of scholars and who smoothed the walls, small and large beams of the chambers everywhere, and in and deep within the solid and wide junctures of these structures they inscribe sentences everywhere with great elegance.</p>
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<p>elegantia inscribunt. Theatra vero aut promptuaria, quæ ego principibus prodo, in suis parietibus poterint ad tabulas omnis generis extendēdas habere circu[m] circa iustæ magnitudinis valuas, quæ hic ut solet in altaribus plerisque fieri, aperiatur: ut bis teruē faciem novam ostendant. Interius ergo fuerit aliqui rerum classis: ut effigies, &amp; picturæ oleginis coloribus: in medio fortè genealogiæ spectaculaque aliqua: demum exterius fortè mappæ, urbes, animalia &amp;c. aut aliæ simpliciores picturæ expeditionum ac prospectuum in telis aqueis coloribus depictæ: Ut quotiescunque inspect[ur] or aliquis, picturas externas circumendo perlustrarit, reversus ad principium, faciem inveniatur nova: famulo aliquo interim parietum valvas obvertente. atque ita de reliquis. Nisi &amp; cortinas aut velamina lubeat circumducere, quæ &amp; ipse non nisi aliquid theatro conveniens, aut eruditum debebunt continere: nam an &amp; scripturæ aliquæ cortinis inscribi debeant iam?</p> <p>Non differo. Delectabitur autem etiam hic forte aliquis scripturæ varietate: ut in his invenie[n]dis Germani non sunt incondite, eas admiserim quidem diversissimos proferri, ita tamen, ut totidem scripturæ Romanis literis factæ, reliquis quomodocunque variantibus, Tanquam per vices, interponerentur, ut Latinis præcipuus honos relinqueretur.</p>	<p>The theatre, in fact, or storehouses, which I publish for the leaders, are able to, on their own walls, have extended tablets of every kind on both sides around the double doors of great regularity, which here as is the custom to be opened in numerous altars: as twice or three times they show a new shape. Therefore within there will be any class of things: as effigies, etc., pictures in olive colours: in the middle by chance others genealogies and spectacles: finally on the outside by chance maps, cities, animals, etc., or other more simple pictures of expeditions and views on warps depicted in water colours: with the result that whenever/any time when they are seen or by others, one will have scanned the external pictures in going around, backwards to the beginning, one will find new forms: after any subject meanwhile turning towards the double doors of the walls.</p> <p>And so about that which is remaining. Unless it is agreeable to lead around both the cauldrons and veils, and which not unless even if he himself coming upon any theatre, they will be responsible for containing skill: or in fact any writings of the vault that ought to be inscribed now I do not publish. However it will be pleasing even here by chance for any kind of varying writing: as in these these things to be discovered the Germans are not uncivilised, I grant that these things in fact bring diverse things forward, however so, in order that the writings are made with Roman letters, with the remaining varying in whatever way, so much through change, and in order to introduce and in order for the particular honours to be left behind for the Latins.</p>
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<p>Repositoria undique in promptu. Inscrip. X. Hic fu[i?]t o[m?]nia, quæ quòquo modo servire debent, rebus &amp; materiis, &amp; imaginibus prædictis. Primo itaque fu[i?]t maiora co[n?]ditoria, quæ</p> <p>F ii <span style="float: right;">mox</span></p> <p>Digressiones                      Theatrum</p> <p>mox in se recipiunt minora, ac quævis scrinia, portatilia, par- vasque siscellas, quales ferè sub ipsa inscriptione nominantur ac plu- ra forma solum differentia possent excogitari. Suntque inter mino- ra præcipue considerandæ capsulæ gemmariae, quæ sub inscrip- tione quinta classis tertiæ dicuntur ubi SEMINA, FRUCTUS LEGUMINA inter digressiones explicantur. Sunt et ibi nomi- nati alveoli, qui ferè apiarios alveolos imitati videntur: quorum itidem quam plurimi diversæ capacitatis sunt coniunctim in promptu habendi. Deinde sunt in præsenti inscriptione nomina- ta armariola, ad formam arcuum triumphalium, &amp; turriculorū, &amp; pyramidum: ea igitur erunt eius solum fortè molis, ut baiuli duo gestare unum queant. Alioqui hic no[n] nocebit etiam antiqua templa rotunda &amp; alia imitari, itemque theatra atque adeò ipsa orbis</p>	<p>Repositories everywhere in plain view. Inscription X. Here was everything which ought to barely preserve, with things and materials and the aforementioned images. First thus there was a greater repository, which soon</p> <p>P. 44</p> <p>Digressions    Theatre</p> <p>recovers minor items in themselves, and whatever it be whether boxes, gates, little cells, of the kind barely named under the inscription itself and many forms alone are able to be understood differently. There are especially lesser forms to be considered of jewellery boxes, which are labeled/declared under the fifth class of inscriptions where SEEDS, FRUITS, LEGUMES among the digressions are explained. And there are there named bowls, which are seen to imitate trays relating to bee-keeping: different capacities than most of which in the same way are joined in holding in view.</p> <p>Next there are in the existing inscription named Little Chests/Cabinets, in the form of triumphal arches, and little towers/turrets and pyramids: these things therefore will not only be by chance massive, as they require one or two carriers/porters to manage. Otherwise this will not even harm ancient round temples and others to be imitated, and similarly the theatre and just as much the miracle itself of the world celebrated in ancient times, as</p>
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<p>miracula priscis temporibus celebrata, quantum ex eruditorum architectorum ingeniis delineari poterint: dummodo sint ita co[n?]-cava huic usui comparata, ut eorum aliquæ partes depromi, aut aperiri, ac denuo recludi possint: quô recipiant in se ea omnia, quæ eis rect[t?]e assignaris: omnino vero ut armariorum pulchram s[f?]uggerant varietatem. Ea quidem orbis miracula, ut sunt a diversis diversè enumerata, &amp; auctiore tandem numero prodita (Baptista Mantuanus enim inter ea templum Solymorum, &amp; Romana theatra præcipuè habenda carmini alicui suo interfuit) obiter ad septem Plenetas astringendo, quævis occurrentia indubitatè tamen pro eis agnita referemus. Itaque sub Saturno, sunt: pyramides AEgyptiæ, Mausolea quæcumque. Sub Iove: templum Dianæ, simulachrum Iovis, &amp; regia Cyri. Sub Marte: muri Babylonis. Sub Sole: arcus triumphales et colossus Soli. Sub Venere: horti pensiles Thebarum. Sub Mercurio turris Pharia noctiluca, et ingentia theatra Romana. Sub Luna: thermæ Diocletianæ, &amp; aliæ, &amp; portus maximi, navaliaque. Quòd autem novoru[m] orbis miraculorum instituendorum primus autor exortus sit princeps meus Albertus dux Bavarus, super libros sacrarum imaginum privatim principi aliquot chiliadibus manu Iohannis Muelichii Monachiensis pictis, mihi videor non</p>	<p>much out of the genius of skilled architects are able to be delineated: provided that there are spaces arranged in this way to be used here, so that other parts of these are produced, or opened, and are able to be disclosed once again: where they may take in all these things in themselves, which after these things are assigned correctly: they altogether in fact furnish a beautiful variety of cabinets.</p> <p>These miracles of the earth in fact, as they are numbered differently by different [sources], and after finally with the enlarged number produced (Baptista Mantuanus in fact lies between in between the temple of Solymor and Roman theatre especially having its particular own poem) by restricting to the seven planets in passing, and with any confidence however we refer back to that which is claimed/recognised for these ones.</p> <p>Therefore under Saturn there are: Egyptian pyramids, and whatever mausoleums. Under Jupiter: the temple of Diana, the likeness of Jove and the queen of Cyrus. Under Mars: the walls of Babylon. Under the Sun: the triumphal arches and Colossus of the Sun. Under Venus: the hanging gardens of Thebes. Under Mercury the lesser moon Pharia of the palace/citadel, and the great Roman theatre. Under the Moon, the Diocletian baths, and other things, and the great port and ship-related items.</p> <p>But however of the new miracles of the city having been established, the first author who came forward was my prince Albert, leader of Bavaria, with several groups of thousands of the above books of images painted in private for the Prince by the hand of Iohannis Muelichius of Munich,</p>
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<p>tenuiter attigisse. cui accidet illos videre,</p> <p>QUICCHEBERGI</p> <p>los videre ob eos ipsos theatrum miraculorum putabit magis celebrandum. Cæterum ipsorum repositiorum, &amp; quasi vasculorum ac thecarum sit etiam mentio ferè principio inter Admonitiones, &amp; super secunda classe Inscr. tertia, ubi FABRILIA ARTIFICIOSA OPERA explicantur. Sed et his omnibus si parietes cum excurrentibus valuis, in digressione, quæ iam iam præcessit indicatis, accedant, habebis facilè omnia, quæ ad repositoria et loca theatri pertinere videbuntur.</p> <p>Hac[e?]tenus ergo digressiones quas ideo peculiari adieci loco, ne inscriptiones, quas concisas, et suis quasi limitibus circumseptas esse volui, ullis liberioribus digressionibus foedarentur. Atque in hoc fortè habebunt aliquando quod imitentur ii, qui à nobis de ratione scribendi libros aliqua expectant. Sed &amp; iidem agnoscant studiose id factu esse, quod hic in angulis externis seu marginibus superioribus vocabula paucula, de iis rebus, quæ in occurrentibus paginis continentur asscripserim: quæ etiam variant ut aut semel, aut bis in patulis libris, pro rei necessitate apponātur. Dum enim coronidalis titulus, id est, ea</p>	<p>appears to me to have not been achieved lightly. For whom it will happen</p> <p>P. 45</p> <p>QUICCHEBERG</p> <p>that those [who] see [the] very objects of wonder of the theatre will be considered to be celebrated even more. Of the rest of the repositories themselves, and just as if even the mentioning of small-vessels and cases may be in general in the beginning with the Warnings, and above the second class, the third inscriptions, where SKILLFULL WORKS IN WOOD/METAL are explained. But with all these things, if they approach, the walls with extending double doors, in the digression, which now surpasses with public announcements, you will consider all things easily, which will be seen to pertain to the location of the theatre.</p> <p>Hitherto, therefore, the digressions which I suggested in this particular place, lest the inscriptions, being concise, as if I wanted to be enclosed by their limits, by any more liberal digressions are defiled. And they will have in this by chance finally what those ones imitate, who expect anything from us about the rationale for writing the books. But the same ones recognise that this is something that must be done seriously, which here whether in external corners or higher margins I had written in few words, which are contained in the occurring pages: which they also vary or at the same time, place near or twice in wide-open books for the necessary matter.</p> <p>While in fact the end-of-book inscription, it is the inscription which is in the last space</p>
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<p>             inscriptio, quæ in supremo est              paginae              spacio, non debet carere principali              titulo totius libri, aut etiam              nomine auctoris (quod prodest ad              libros quomodocunque dissolu-              tos facilè colligendos) hi saltem              anguli administrent paginarum              argumenta: maximè ubi non sunt              tractationes in capita distribu-              ta: aut ea capita sunt adeo prolixa, ut              pagellas volvendi non sta-              tim quæsitæ materiæ occurrant.              Patior autem typographos hu-              ismodi marginales titulos suo              quodam modo concordantiales              titulos vocare: modo à coronidalibus              titulis in medio sitis              dis-              cernantur. Porro non omnes etiam              inscriptiones sumpsimus ex-              plicandas, quòd singulas pertractandi              aut dilatandi nunquam fi-              nis esset futurus. Siquidem ea adsunt              omnia, quæ universa natura              compræhendit, quæ omnes libri              docent, quæ tota vita humana              fuggerere potest: nulla enim              disciplina disci, nullum artificium              confiderari, nulla vitæ conditio              mente concipi potest, quæ non              habeat hic sua fundamenta,              instrumenta, adiumenta, documenta.              Ei igitur candidato cui in eiusmodi              theatro quale utiliter fundari  <div style="text-align: center;">F    iii                      iam</div> </p> <p>             De impera-        THEATRUM              tore.         </p> <p>             iam consului, versari aliquandiu         </p>	<p>             of the page, ought not to be missing from              the first inscription/heading of the entire              book, or even the name of the author              (which is useful for the easy collecting of              books destroyed in one way or another)              these angles at least manage the arguments              of the pages: to a great degree when there              are not treatments in the divided chapters:              whether these chapters are extensive, or              they occur not right away in the searched-              for material by turning the pages. I permit              however printers of this kind, marginal              headings formerly in their own way called              concordance headings: they distinguish              only from the end-inscriptions in the              middle position.         </p> <p>             Further on, not all the inscriptions even we              consider for explaining which was to be              drawn out or the end not at all expanded              upon in the future.              If accordingly all these things are present,              which grasps nature universally, which all              books will teach, which all of human life is              able to flee: no discipline in fact is able to              be taught, no skill is trusted, no agreement              of life can be conceived in mind, which              does not have here its own foundations,              instrument, support, example, for this              candidate for whom in the whatever kind of              theatre of the kind more useful to be              established, now to be consulted,         </p> <p>             P. 46         </p> <p>             [...] THEATRE         </p> <p>             to be turned in for a long time it is         </p>
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concedetūr, si rebus præsentibus omnibus ascripta sua nomina (loco & linguis ubi versandum erit necessaria) intuebitur, si ad quas delegerit classes rectè intelligendas non venerit planè rudis, sed quandam discendi methodo instructus, hic quæ cognata, differentia, contraria, aut in reliquo subiecto confideranda examinarit, abesse non poterit, quin brevisimo tempore sine magno labore, & periculis molestiisque, quæ alioqui in pervestigatione rerum tollerendæ forent, incredibilem omniu[m] rerum peritiam, & divinam planè prudentiam acquirat. Nam d[i?]u reliqua omnium disciplinarum communia instrumenta sint libri: hic ex obtutu picturarum, ex inspectione materiarum, & apparatu instrumentorum universitatis, quibus mox partitoria tabulæ, veræ synopses habendæ, subservient, omnia fiunt apertiora atque dilucidiora. quamvis nolo hic etiam obticere arithmologias, ad hanc rem carmine collectas pertinentes: si & illæ adhibebuntur, quā tum allat uræ sint hic emolumenti. Tales quidem Gerhardi Fausti antè aliquot annos non paucae visæ sunt, & iam prodeunt subinde Antuerpiæ non paucae ab Hadriano Iunio, apud ipsas imagines, & hic Monachii Græce à Petro Cortoneo ducis medico ac philosopho cuius generis, potissimum tamen Latina, duodecimum in annum (ex omnium ætatum poëtis)

conceded, if having been written/enrolled in its own name by all present matters (in place and languages where necessity will be turning about) it will be seen, if the classes will be chosen with a view towards that which can be understood it will not arrive from a rough plan, but taught by a method formerly to be learned, which understood here, differently or contrarily, either in the what remains that has been exposed what can be trusted will be examined, and not able to be left out, since in the shortest time without much labour, and with dangers and annoyances, which ought to be considering any investigation of things, one clearly acquires an incredible practical knowledge of all things, and divine wisdom. Since for a long time there may be books left behind of all disciplines with common methods: Here out of the contemplation of pictures/paintings, out of the inspection of materials, out of the preparation of universal instruments, for which divided tables soon, having [a] true, complete picture, they will be of use, to make everything more open and clear. However much I do not wish here to even suppress numerical arguments. Pertaining to these objects collected towards with a poem: and if those things will be employed, by which then they will be reported here as an advantage. So great indeed were seen of Gerhard Faustus before some years, not a few, and now they thereupon appear, not a few of Anterpiæ from Hadrianus Iunius, among the images themselves, and here of Monachius Graecus by Petrus Cortoneus, medical doctor and philosopher of the Duke whose kind, however able/prominent in Latin, for twelve years (out of the poets of every age) I collect, so that not already there are a

<p>colligo, ut non iam chiliades sint exemplorum subinde ad certam rem pertinentium: sed myri- ades potius non paucae. Ut autem non est mei instituti hæc omnia ad unguem declarare, sic etiam ulterius nolo dignioribus elogiis totum institutum theatri commendare. Illud enim cuilibet ingenio so principi, ac optimati, &amp; literato, quando rerum aliquam copiam collegerit, aut fatis rem totam considerarit, faciendum relinquo</p>	<p>group of a thousand of examples thereupon pertaining to a certain matter: but myriads more than a few. As however it not for my habit to make precise statements about all these things, even so I do not wish in addition with more dignified inscriptions to recommend the entire institution of the theatre. That person who with whatever ingenious principle, and excellence, and literary skill, when any quantity of things he will have collected, or when by destiny he will have considered the entire matter, I leave the matter behind to be achieved.</p>
<p>EXEMPLA</p>	<p>EXEMPLARS</p>
<p>[...]</p>	<p>[...] <sup>824</sup></p>
<p>Theatrum</p>	<p>P. 62</p>
<p>Theatre</p>	<p>Theatre</p>
<p>ERASMUS VENDIUS IN THEA- tra ill[.]mi principis Alberti Bavariae ducis. <i>Si quid habet rari vastis complexibus orbis/ Aemula natura Boia theatra tenent./ Principis Alberti fulgent monumenta benigni./ Excellae mentis sunt simulachra suae.</i></p>	<p>ERASMUS VENIUS IN THE THEATRE Of his most illustrious prince Albert, Duke of Bavaria. <i>If anyone holds something from the vast complexes of this rare earth Theatres to be emulated hold wonders of nature [Boia?]. Monuments of the good prince Albert shine. They are images of his own excellent mind.</i></p>
<p>VITUS IACOBÆUS POETA CAESARUES Hic inter studia pacis [f?]uggeri etiam armorum exercitationem.</p>	<p>VITUS JACOBÆUS, CEASARIAN POET  Here amongst the studies of peace to be suggested even for the weapons training.</p>

<sup>824</sup> The *Exemplars* do not appear as part of this translation.

<p><i>Tempore quid pacis meditandum, aut tempor belli,/</i>  <i>Hac Quicchelbergus sub brevitae docet.</i>  <i>Accipe nobilitas tua quid sibi munia poscant,/</i>  <i>Agnosce officium doctaque turba tuum.</i></p> <p>GABRIELIS CASTNERI ELEGIA.  cum ad Sam. Quicchebergum  historica exempla  secundum classes theatri  colligentem.</p> <p><i>Goltzius extremis famam quæsit in oris,/</i>  <i>Dum studio veterum colligit æra patrum./</i>  <i>Una tamen</i></p> <p><i>Una tamen res est, species nec discolor illa,/</i>  <i>A primo nusquam divariata scopo./</i>  <i>Heu tua quos peragrat Samuel meditatio campos,/</i>  <i>Materiam nullo tu prope fine seras./</i>  <i>Hic simulachra locas sacra, hic insignia, mappas,/</i>  <i>Materias illic ponis, &amp;[?] effigies./</i>  <i>Das generum series, das instrumenta sororum/</i>  <i>Euterpes nymphæ, Terpsichoresque, deæ./</i>  <i>Singula quid dicam? Res infinita relatu est,/</i>  <i>Quæ poscit studium poscit &amp;[?] ingenium./</i>  <i>Si laus tanta ergo per sola numismata surgit,/</i></p>	<p><i>In time which is contemplating peace, or in time of war,</i>  <i>Quicchelberg teaches with this brevity.</i></p> <p><i>Accept your nobility what duties they demand for themselves,</i>  <i>Recognise your duty and teach the masses.</i></p> <p>ELEGY OF GABRIEL CASTERNI.  With an historical example according to  Sam. Quicchebergum according to the  collected classes of the theatre.</p> <p><i>Goltzius in the end sought fame in speech, While he recovers the ancient age of our ancestors with eagerness.</i></p> <p>P. 63</p> <p><i>One thing is however, neither that kind of a different colour, Never from the first changed scope. Alas, Samuel, which fields your meditation have traveled to, You join together materials almost with no end. Here sacred images, places, here insignia, maps, Materials and effigies do you place over there? Give the appearance of noble birth, give the deeds of the sisters Euterpes and Terpsichores, the nymphs, of goddesses. What will you say about each one? Is the matter is to be recalled for infinity, Which demands that which study and talent asks?</i></p>
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<p><i>Quantam nunc merito Goltzius autor habet,/</i>  <i>Quanta Quicelbergo debetur gloria nostro,/</i>  <i>Qui species rerum colligit innumeras?/</i>  <i>Hinc ubi quem longo concinnas tempore librum/</i>  <i>Aedes, exemplis qui scatet historicis, Tunc facili dudum qui currere tramite coepit,/</i>  <i>Se magis effundens laxior ibit honor.</i></p>	<p><i>If so much praise therefore for the study of coins alone arises, How much glory ought there to be for our Quicchelberg, Who collects innumerable kinds of things? Henceforth when, the well-organised room which for a long time is alive with books, and with double-entranced examples, Then he who formerly began to run along the footpath easily, Stretching himself to a greater extent, honour will also move forward more openly.</i></p>
<p>IODOCUS CASTNERVUS DE theatro Quicchebergi.  <i>Artis ut immensa captus dulcedine lustres/</i>  <i>Mirandum vastus quicquid hic orbis habet,/</i>  <i>Turgida navifragum quid opus dare vela per æquor?/</i>  <i>Quid cupide terras tot peragrarere iuvat?</i>  <i>Unum per</i></p>	<p>IODOCUS CASTNERVUS about The Quiccheberg Theatre.  <i>As you look around captured by the sweet, immensity of art Whatever his vast sphere has to be held in awe, What kind of work ought to give sail across the swollen sea? How eagerly can one enjoy crossing so many lands?</i></p>
<p><i>Unum per classes quod promit cuncta theatrum/</i>  <i>Esse potest mundi totius instar opus.</i></p>	<p>P. 64</p> <p><i>That which he presents as one theatre through all the classes together, Can be a work without equal in the whole world.</i></p>
<p>IOACHIMUS HABERSTOK FRISIN.  gen[?]. ad Aegidium Oertel, &amp; Sam. Quichebergum.</p>	<p>IOCHIMUS HABERSTOK FRISIN [gen] to Aegidius Oertel &amp; Sam. Quicchebergum.</p>
<p><i>A Equatur numero, Musis exulta, deorum,/</i>  <i>Solis &amp;[?] exuperat, mens studiosa,</i></p>	<p><i>It is made equal in number, honoured by the Muses, of the gods, Surpassed by the sun, a studious mind and</i></p>

<p> <i>domus./</i>  <i>Hæc sed ob invigiles saltem (res magna) labores/</i>  <i>Coelitus adveniens gratia dia [=diu] datur./</i>  <i>Nec nisi in ingenuis Musarum ritè latebris/</i>  <i>Versans, hoc tanto munere dignus erit./</i>  <i>Lustrare ergo sacras res est pia bibliothecas,/</i>  <i>Inde etenim nomen crede perenne venit,/</i>  <i>Credita sicque tibi Boiani principis Oertli/</i>  <i>Perpetuum nomen Bibliotheca dabit./</i>  <i>Sed maior longè, multis celebranda Camoenis/</i>  <i>Ardua res doctis &amp; labor ille viris./</i>  <i>Multiplaci serie &amp; variis spectanda figuris,/</i>  <i>Istituisse nova Musica templa modo,/</i>  <i>Quod benè constructo præbes Quicheberge theatro,/</i>  <i>Quo si quid, moriar, doctius esse potest.</i> </p> <p>FINIS.</p>	<p> <i>home.</i>  <i>May you watch over these great labours [great things] at least</i>  <i>And coming to heaven, thanks is given for a long time.</i>  <i>Neither if not turning in the indigenous hiding places of the Muses by rite,</i>  <i>This will be dignified with so great of a service.</i>  <i>Therefore it is pious to honour sacred things of the library,</i>  <i>And from there because the name comes with continual belief,</i>  <i>He who believes so, to you the library will grant eternal name of the prince Boianus and Oertlus.</i>  <i>But even longer, with many Camoeni[?] to be celebrated</i>  <i>The difficult matters for the learned ones and that labour for honour.</i>  <i>With a great sequence and many figures to be viewed,</i>  <i>To have set up new temples in the manner of music,</i>  <i>Which you make available after the Quiccheberg Theatre was well constructed,</i>  <i>By which if anyone, should I die, is able to be more learned.</i> </p> <p>THE END.</p>
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