

2010

# Wonder : the collection, the cabinet, the container & the trace

Clare Cochrane  
*University of Wollongong*

---

## Recommended Citation

Cochrane, Clare, Wonder : the collection, the cabinet, the container & the trace, Doctor of Creative Arts thesis, University of Wollongong - Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong, 2010. <http://ro.uow.edu.au/theses/3190>

## **UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG**

### **COPYRIGHT WARNING**

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study. The University does not authorise you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site. You are reminded of the following:

Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright. A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. A court may impose penalties and award damages in relation to offences and infringements relating to copyright material. Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study.

Wonder: The Collection, The Cabinet, The Container & The Trace

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the  
degree

Doctor of Creative Arts

from

University of Wollongong

by

Clare Elizabeth Cochrane

BCA Hons, University of Wollongong  
Faculty of Creative Arts  
2008

## Abstract

This thesis explores historical and contemporary notions of collecting and employs the concept of wonder as a device through which to negotiate notions of the collection, the cabinet, the container and the trace. Throughout the thesis all my observations are examined through the historical collections of the *Wunderkammern* and the ‘cabinets of curiosity’. The thesis examines the cabinet in the work of Australian artist Patrick Hall, explores modes of containment in the work of Australian artist Fiona Hall and finally examines the trace as a critical theme in my practice. By focusing on these particular collections and artists I construct a framework to illustrate my theoretical and practical concerns which have culminated in this document and my final exhibition, both entitled Wonder: The Collection, The Cabinet, The Container & The Trace.

My research is concerned with imagery, artworks and objects chosen as the appropriate methodologies through which to examine, discuss and link themes of collection and narrative. By utilizing primary source materials, pictorial references, artist’s interviews, and exhibition reviews, my research offers exciting and fresh perspectives of conceptual and practical processes of collectors and artists.

The relevance of this study is to provide insights into the ideas and examples of the collection, the cabinet, the container, and the trace. In particular I explore the significant conceptual and methodological practices connected to idiosyncratic systems and narrative constructs which lie within contemporary visual arts.

## **Certification**

I, Clare Elizabeth Cochrane, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Creative Arts, in the Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Clare Elizabeth Cochrane, 2008

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my mother, Maggie Kyle and my father, Tony Cochrane for keeping me going throughout all the trials, joys, successes, setbacks and chaos. A special thanks to my nana, Elizabeth Kyle who has maintained absolute belief in all my endeavors. Also, an important thank you to Ben and Peter for the laughs, tears and insanity. To each and everyone of my family who attended all my openings shared my celebrations and gave me space when I disappeared into my office / studio for weeks on end, thank you.

To Patrick Hall, thank you for answering all my many questions and supplying me with more resources than I could possibly do justice to in this exegesis. Thanks also to Ted Abbot a local character and wealth of information from Hill End, and who although thinking I have some strange ideas is always ready to assist in any way.

To all my long suffering friends who have been there for me with cups of tea, tissues, chocolate, stiff drinks and whatever else I currently need.

To Didier, Tanya, Craig and Olena a huge thank you for your technical and organisational skills and for making the experience at UOW one I will always remember. Thanks to my supervisors Penny Harris, Diana Wood Conroy, and Amanda Lawson who have taught me many important lessons and who inspire me to work harder.

Finally, thanks to Inky who has been there for every moment of the last four years with unwavering support no matter what I say or do.

## **Table of Contents**

Abstract  
Candidate's Declaration  
Acknowledgements  
Introduction  
Table of Contents  
List of Figures

### ***The Collection***

#### **Chapter 1**

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 The Wunderkammern as Origin
- 1.3 The Reflective 'Cabinets of Curiosity'
- 1.4 The Collector
- 1.5 Containment and Knowledge Constructs
- 1.6 Conclusion

### ***The Cabinet***

#### **Chapter 2 Patrick Hall**

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 The Art of Collection
- 2.3 The Cabinet
- 2.4 Gestures of the Cabinet
- 2.5 Organising Narratives
- 2.6 Conclusion

### ***The Container***

#### **Chapter 3 Fiona Hall**

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 An Exhibition
- 3.3 Subjectified Systems
- 3.4 Repetitions of Containment
- 3.5 Conclusion

*The Trace*

**Chapter 4**

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Intangible Containment
- 4.3 Hill End: Traces of Memory
- 4.4 The Debris of Domesticity
- 4.5 Conclusion

Conclusion

Works Cited

Bibliography

List of figures with sources of illustrations

Appendix



## List of Figures (Sources for Illustrations on p. 211)

### Chapter 1

Fig. 1. Ostrich-egg; cup and cover	11
Fig. 2. Setting to hold a cherry stone, carved with thirty miniscule heads.	13
Fig. 3. Museum Wormianum (catalogue frontispiece)	15
Fig. 4. Collection of the apothecary Francesco Calzolari	17
Fig. 5. Museum of Ferrante Imperato	19
Fig. 6. Museum of Ferrante Imperato (Detail)	21
Fig. 7. Museum of Ferrante Imperato (Detail)	23
Fig. 8. Title page: <u>De Sepi</u> , From the collection of Athanasius Kircher	26
Fig. 9. Portrait of Kircher (c. 1683)	27
Fig. 10. Amber Cabinet	29
Fig. 11. Title page for Basilius Besler <u>Fasciculus rariorum varii generis</u>	30
Fig. 12. <u>Le Cabinet de la bibliothèque de Saint-Genevieve</u> (Detail)	31
Fig. 13 – 13.3. Display cabinet (1620-30)	32
Fig. 14. A <i>Trompe l'oeil</i> depicting a curiosity cabinet	34
Fig. 15. Frontispiece of <u>Museum Septalanium</u>	39
Fig. 16. <u>Cabinet of Art and Rarities</u> of the Regensburg Iron Dealer and Mining Family Dimple	41
Fig. 17. Designs for the Cabinet of Bonnier de la Mosson	43
Fig. 18. Portrait of Albertus Seba with collection	46
Fig. 19. Kunstschränke of Gustavus Adolphus	47
Fig. 20. Collection of Andrea Vendramin, Manuscript Catalogue detail	48
Fig. 21. Johann Kentman's 'mineral cabinet' from his <u>Nomenclaturae Rerum Fossilium</u>	49
Fig. 22. Shop of Remy, selling curiosities.	52
Fig. 23. <u>Cabinet of Art and Rarities</u> of the Regensburg Iron Dealer and Mining Family Dimple (Detail)	53
Fig. 24. Wenzel Jamnitzer, Writing Set	54
Fig. 25. Wenzel Jamnitzer, Writing Set (detail)	55

**Chapter 2**

Fig. 26. <u>Museum Animals</u>	59
Fig. 27. <u>Power Blocks</u>	62
Fig. 28. <u>Level</u> , (Detail)	63
Fig. 29. <u>The Shelves of Mary Jarvis</u> , (Detail)	64
Fig. 30. <u>Dance with a False Moon</u> (Detail)	65
Fig. 31. <u>Bedtime Stories</u> , (Detail)	66
Fig. 32. <u>Archive of Little Losses</u>	68
Fig. 33. <u>Archive of Little Losses</u> , (Detail)	69
Fig. 34. <u>Bounty</u>	70
Fig. 35. <u>Bounty</u> , (Detail)	72
Fig. 36. Cabinet of Gustavus Adolphus (see fig. 19)	74
Fig. 37. <u>Lure</u>	77
Fig. 38. <u>China Bones</u>	79
Fig. 39. <u>China Bones</u> , (Detail)	80
Fig. 40. <u>Stack</u> , (Detail)	81
Fig. 41. <u>Stack</u>	82
Fig. 42. <u>Stack</u> , (opening)	82
Fig. 43. <u>Things He Once Was</u> , (Detail)	83
Fig. 44. <u>Things He Once Was</u> , (Detail)	84
Fig. 45. <u>Typeface</u> , (Detail)	86
Fig. 46. <u>Of Broken Pieces</u>	88
Fig. 47. <u>Of Broken Pieces</u> , (Details)	90

**Chapter 3**

Fig. 48. <u><i>Nelumbo nucifera</i>; nelum (Sinhala); thamareri (Tamil); lotus</u> , (Detail)	95
Fig. 49. <u>Tender</u> , (Detail)	95
Fig. 50. <u>Cell Culture</u> , (Detail)	95
Fig. 51. <u>Cash Crop</u> , (Detail)	95
Fig. 52. <u>Occupied Territory</u> , (Detail)	95
Fig. 53. <u>Give a Dog A Bone</u> , (Detail)	96
Fig. 54. <u>Medicine bundle for the non-born child</u>	97

Fig. 55. <u>Holdfast (Macrocystis angustifolio/giant kelp)</u>	98
Fig. 56. <u>Castles in the Air of the Cave-Dwellers</u>	99
Fig. 57. <u>Occupied Territory</u>	101
Fig. 58. <u>Tender</u>	102
Fig. 59. <u>When My Boat Comes In</u>	103
Fig. 60. Nest from <u>Tender</u> alongside nest of a noisy friarbird (Philemon corniculatus)	106
Fig. 61. <u>Tender</u> , (Detail)	107
Fig. 62. Decoding a one dollar bill	110
Fig. 63. <u>Citrus paradisi / grapefruit Paradisus terrestris</u>	111
Fig. 64. <u>Araucaria bidwillii; bunya-bunya (Yagara); bunya pine Paradisus terrestris entitled</u>	112
Fig. 65. <u>Opuntia ficus-indica / prickly pear Paradisus terrestris</u> , (Detail)	114
Fig. 66. <u>Kinga australis; bullanok (Nyoongar); black gin Paradisus terrestris entitled</u> , (Detail)	114
Fig. 67. <u>Masa sapientum; kehel (Sinhala); vala (Tamil); banana Paradisus terrestris (Sri Lankan series)</u> , (Detail)	114
Fig. 68. <u>Nelumbo nucifera; nelum (Sinhala); thamareri (Tamil); lotus Paradisus terrestris (Sri Lankan Series)</u>	115
Fig. 69. Nelumbo nucifera	116
Fig. 70. <u>Fieldwork</u>	117
Fig. 71. <u>Understorey</u>	118
Fig. 72. <u>Dead in the Water</u>	118
Fig. 73. <u>Mourning Chorus</u> , (Detail)	119
Fig. 74. <u>Mourning Chorus</u> , (Detail)	121
Fig. 75. <u>Mourning Chorus</u> , (Detail)	121
Fig. 76. <u>Inferno, canto III: The Gates of Hell</u>	123
Fig. 77. <u>Untitled</u>	123
Fig. 78. <u>Untitled</u>	124
Fig. 79. <u>Daphne</u>	125
Fig. 80. <u>Plumeria acutifolia; araliya (Sinhala; malliya poo (Tamil); frangipani / temple tree</u>	125

## Chapter 4

Fig. 81. <u>Curious Expressions &amp; Impossible Wonders</u>	131
Fig. 82. <u>Curious Expressions &amp; Impossible Wonders</u> , (Detail)	133
Fig. 83. <u>Go. Move. Shift.</u> , (Process Work)	135
Fig. 84. <u>Go. Move. Shift.</u> , (Process Work)	135
Fig. 85. <u>Go. Move. Shift.</u>	136
Fig. 86. <u>Go. Move. Shift.</u> , (Detail)	136
Fig. 87. <u>Go. Move. Shift.</u> , (Detail)	137
Fig. 88. Tambaroora General Cemetery	140
Fig. 89. Tambaroora General Cemetery	140
Fig. 90. Tambaroora Catholic Cemetery	140
Fig. 91. Tambaroora Catholic Cemetery	140
Fig. 92. Tambaroora General Cemetery	140
Fig. 93. <u>Weathering Echoes on a Scarred Landscape</u> , (Detail)	141
Fig. 94. <u>Untitled (Ensnare)</u> , (Detail)	141
Fig. 95. <u>Citing The Landscape</u> , (Detail)	143
Fig. 96. <u>Citing The Landscape</u> , (Detail)	145
Fig. 97. <u>Citing The Landscape</u> , (Detail)	146
Fig. 98. Universal Grid Reference	147
Fig. 99. <u>panm3_007.jpg</u>	148
Fig. 100. <u>ldsc68_005.jpg</u>	148
Fig. 101. <u>jam31_00095.jpg</u>	148
Fig. 102. Mud Map	150
Fig. 103. <u>wcc5_0005.jpg</u>	152
Fig. 104. <u>ldsiib.jpg</u>	153
Fig. 105. <u>ldsiibIMG.jpg</u>	153
Fig. 106. <u>Things I Know About Your Debris</u> , (Detail)	155
Fig. 107. <u>Things I Know About Your Debris</u> , (Detail)	156
Fig. 108. <u>Trace</u>	157
Fig. 109. <u>Things I Know About Your Debris</u> , (Detail)	159
Fig. 110. <u>Things I Know About Your Debris</u> , (Detail)	160
Fig. 111. <u>Untitled (Sleep)</u>	161
Fig. 112. <u>Untitled (Travel)</u>	162

Fig. 113. <u>Vestiges of Domesticity</u> , (Detail General)	164
Fig. 114. <u>Vestiges of Domesticity</u> , (Detail Electrical)	164
Fig. 115. <u>Vestiges of Domesticity</u> , (Detail Electrical)	164
Fig. 116. <u>Vestiges of Domesticity</u> , (Detail Electrical)	164
Fig. 117. <u>Vestiges of Domesticity</u> , (Detail Wet)	164
Fig. 118. <u>Vestiges of Domesticity</u> , (Detail Wet)	164