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

Clare Cochrane

*University of Wollongong*

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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

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