

MARK DION

COSMOGRAPHIA SELECTED WORKS ON PAPER : 1991-2014

Mark Dion & Dana Sherwood, *Pencils*, 2014

FROM 12.09 TO 31.10.2014
OPENING THURSDAY 11.09 - 6 P.M.

Known for his complex installations inspired by the Wunderkammern and museums, if not scientific laboratories, Mark Dion takes particular interest in the relationship between man and nature through the constructs of knowledge and scientific dissertations produced throughout the ages.

During exploration projects that undertaken since the early 90's, the artist has produced numerous documents: photographs, collections of notes, various data, as well as many graphic works.

The Gallery In Situ has chosen to honor these works that led to the long-term projects that the artist has developed since the beginning of his artistic career.

Characterized primarily by a blue and red color coding, a composition and a very clear layout, Mark Dion's drawings are reminiscent of the artist's taste for the naturalist displays and archaeological surveys.

Through this conscientious, falsely laborious and naive fashion, we peer into the precision with which the artist builds and develops his projects, and how he is constantly ruminating on the rapport culture enjoys with nature.

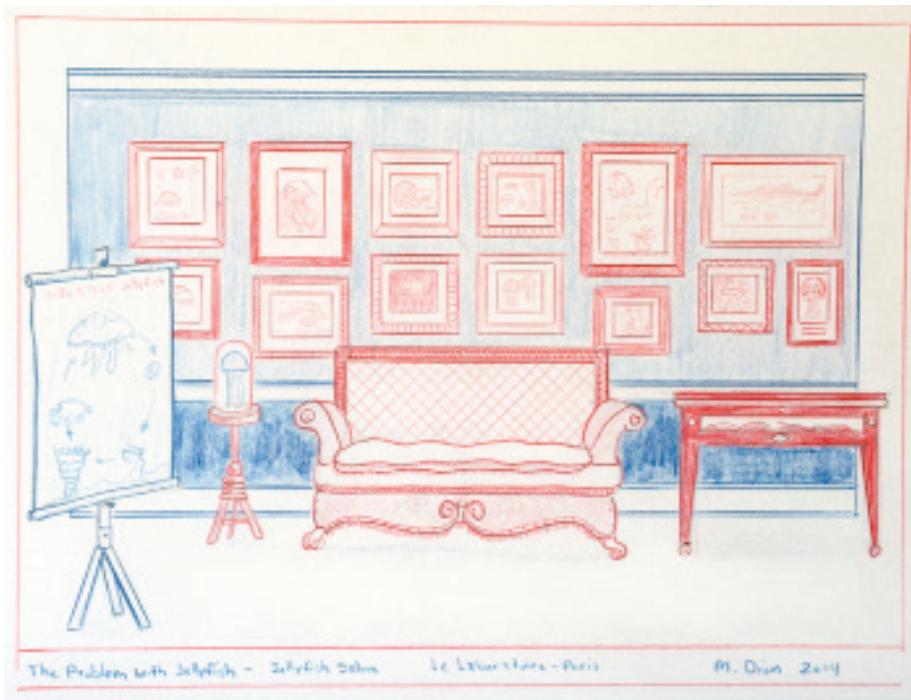
Born in Massachusetts in 1961, Dion currently lives in New York City. He received a BFA and an honorary doctorate from the University of Hartford School of Art, Connecticut in 1986 and 2003, respectively. He also studied at the School of Visual Arts in New York from 1982-84, and participated in the Whitney Museum of American Art's Independent Study Program from 1984-85. He has received numerous awards, including the ninth annual Larry Aldrich Foundation Award (2001) and the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Lucida Art Award (2008).

Throughout the past two decades, his work has been the subject of major exhibitions worldwide. Notable solo exhibitions include The Macabre Treasury at Museum Het Domein in Sittard, The Netherlands, (2013), Oceanomania: Souvenirs of Mysterious Seas at Musée Océanographique de Monaco and Nouveau Musée National de Monaco / Villa Paloma in Monaco (2011), The Marvelous Museum: A Mark Dion Project at Oakland Museum of California (2010-11), Systema Metropolis at Natural History Museum, London (2007), The South Florida Wildlife Rescue Unit at Miami Art Museum (2006), Rescue Archaeology, a project for the Museum of Modern Art (2004), and his renowned Tate Thames Dig at the Tate Gallery in London (1999).

IN SITU
FABIENNE LECLERC

**MARK DION
INSTALLATIONS & SCULPTURES (SELECTION)**





Mark Dion

The problem with Jellyfish - Jellyfish salon Le laboratoire - Paris, 2014

Red and blue pencil on paper

22 x 30 cm not framed (36,5 x 43,5 cm with frame)

Unique piece



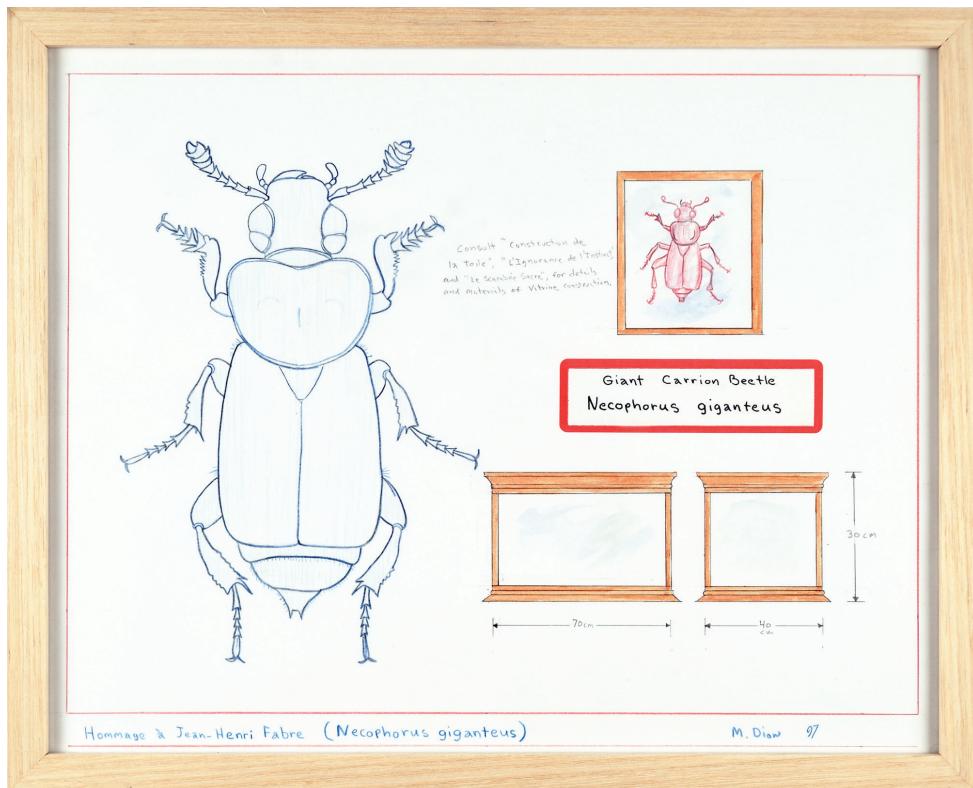
Mark Dion

The Demon Net, 2014

Red and blue pencil on paper

23 x 30,5 cm not framed

Unique piece



Mark Dion

Hommage à Jean-Henri Fabre (Necophorus Giganteus), 1997

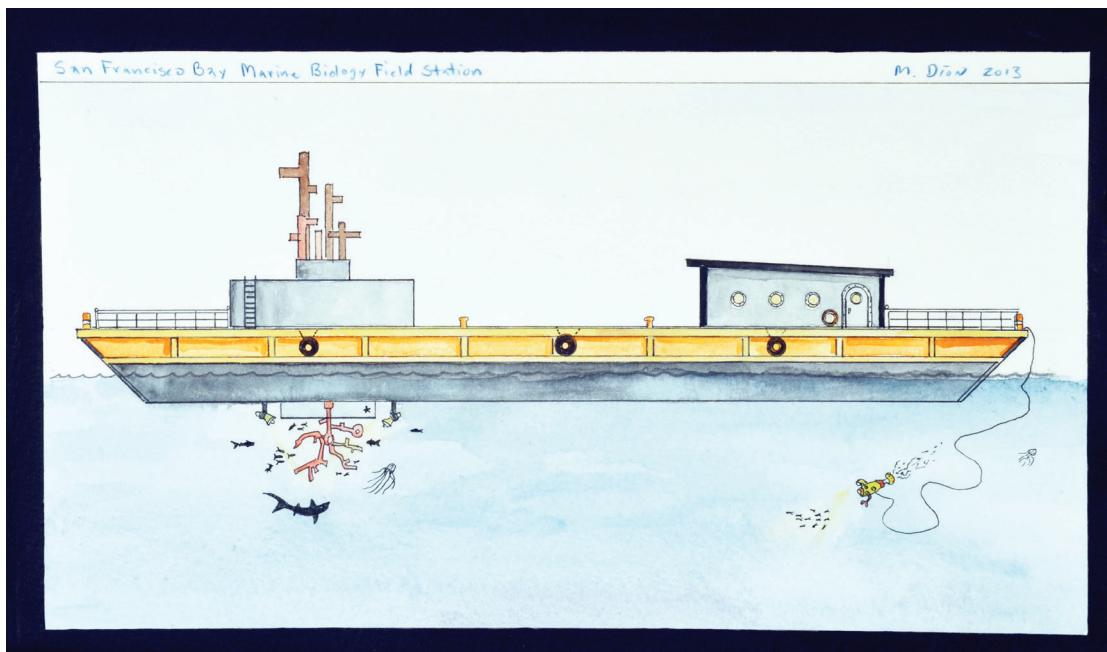
Red and blue pencil, watercolor on paper
27 x 35 cm
Unique piece



Mark Dion

200 years / 200 objects - A Project for the Royal Edinburgh Hospital, 2013

Red and blue pencil on paper
25 x 30,5 cm not framed
Unique piece



Mark Dion

San Francisco Bay Marine Biology Field Station, 2013

Watercolor and pencil on paper

17,9 x 30 cm unframed (30 x 42,3 cm with frame)

Unique piece



Hunting Standard (stag)

M. Dion 05

Mark Dion

Hunting Standard (Stag), 2005

Watercolor, pen and collage on paper

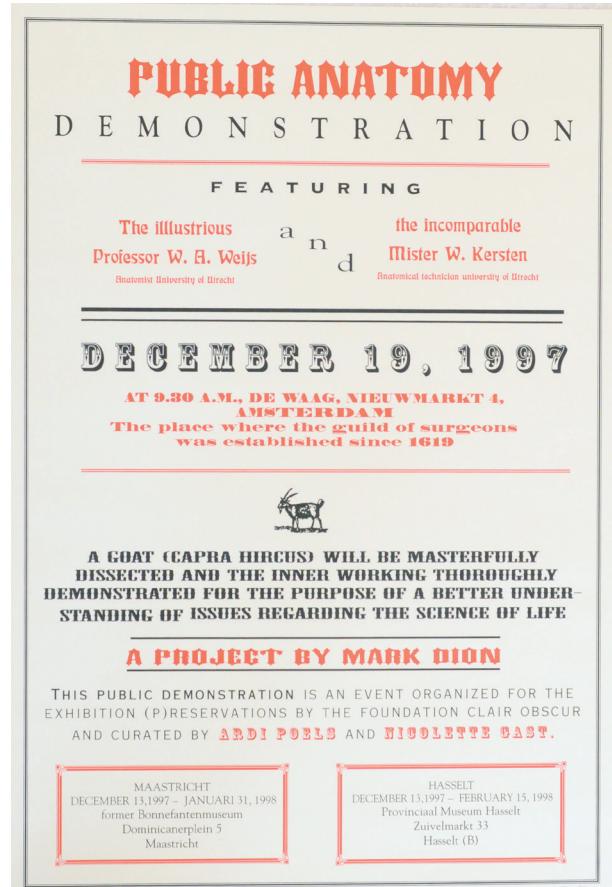
50 x 38 cm

Unique piece



Mark Dion

The Amazing Zoological Wonder, 1998
Red, black and white print on paper
46,5 x 21 cm (59,5 x 33 cm with frame)
Edition de 1



Mark Dion

Public Anatomy Demonstration, 1997
Red and black print on white paper
63,5 x 43,3 cm (75 x 54,5 cm with frame)
Edition of 30

Cosmographia

Interview with Mark Dion

- Since the early 90's your graphic work corpus is mainly composed of drawings in which you use scrupulously the red/blue color code, and a clearly defined line.

You chose to announce the exhibition with a picture displaying side by side a collection of bicolor pencil stubs : It seems to claim the importance of this « code» !

Could you tell us about it's origins ?

MD: The red and blue pencil is something I have employed since my very first mature drawings as an artist. Curiously these first drawing I exhibited (now in the collection of MoMA in NYC) were made in Paris as well. They were the drawing for my 1990 exhibition "Extinction, Dinosaurs, and Disney: The Desks of Mickey Cuvier". Up until that point I had made almost no works on paper, however when I made the drawings I realized what a valuable tool they could be when producing complex installations. In Paris I discovered the 'accountant's pencil' which is red on one side (for losses) and blue on the other (for additions). Two colors allowed me to differentiate aspects of the drawing, be that foreground and background, details and generalities, even different responsibilities for myself and my assistants. At first, the drawings were only tools, helping me describe the sculptures and installations I was making. Later on they became more of a way of thinking through the process of art making itself. Certainly there are many drawing made now that are purely works in themselves, and not related to sculptures or other projects. In fact the act of drawing is perhaps one of the most important aspect of my practice.

- Some drawings are clearly related to your installations and sculptures.

They give very indications indications and details, as if they were key documents for their realization... at which step of your project do you start to make them ?

MD: As I mentioned the first drawings related to making a complex installation here in Paris. I needed to find many curious objects, but had a hard time explaining what I was looking for. I don't really speak French so how should I explain that I need an hourglass, a toy Tyrannosaurus Rex, or step ladder. With these drawings I could point to the objects I required from flea market dealers, fabricators, assistants, anyone. From this very real need arose one of the most vibrant and generative activities of my artistic life. However, I still use drawing for its practical aspects. Proposals for exhibitions, public art works and complex projects, like the one I produced for Documenta all start with note book drawings, which become finished drawings.

- Are the drawings all necessarily related to the projects you are working on in the same period ?
Can they be autonomous ?

MD: While there are many drawings which relate to projects and sculptures, I also make autonomous drawings which help me think things through, are a pure pleasure to produce, or articulate ideas which can not be otherwise embodied. I enjoy making the drawing which is challenging and expansive.

- We know you enjoy working with many collaborators. In the selection displayed at the gallery, could tell me more about the people you collaborated with ?

MD: When an artist collaborates it is an opportunity to learn. I have been making art for about thirty years now and so I have my way of doing things- my methodologies, my strategies, my habits. It can be really helpful and revealing to step outside of your established behavior, to learn from another artist what is important to them, how they proceed, what are their priorities. At the same time it is not a joyful union if the collaborators feel that have to compromise too much. So I work with artists who I am already very close to, that I highly respect and enjoy being with. Robert Williams, and Dana Sherwood are two of these who have strong knowledge bases independent from my own interests, but also overlapping in places. We share some of the same passions, but make art in different ways.

- Hunting and sea life seems to be important subjects in the most recent works : could you tell us more about it ?

MD: My work is an interrogation of the culture of nature. Some of this involves looking at the history of natural history. However the culture of nature is not something which the history of science has a monopoly on. What gets to be nature for a particular society at a distinct time is determined by a broad cross section of cultural producers. Hunters are very much part of that, and have a long and complex history and visual culture. I am very drawn to the contradictions in hunting. On one hand you have a group of people who truly love animals, and who strive to understand local ecology. However the expression of their knowledge and affinity is expressed in killing. There is something encoded in this relationship which says a great deal about the general attitude toward nature in the West. I am always searching to discover how our suicidal relationship to the natural world evolved. Hunting certainly is one important place to look for clues.

I do make a great deal of work around the sea. Growing up on the sea and having a strong bond with it, is only half the story. It is clear that today there is little good news coming from the ocean. I feel I must somehow contribute to the discussion around the crisis of the sea's biodiversity. As an artist, I have never been afraid of speaking frankly and having something to say. That is the kind of art I most respond to and it is the kind of work I make.

- Do you have a funny anecdote or a really particular relationship to one of them ?

MD: When I work with my wife, Dana Sherwood we often sit together and brain storm. When we don't know what to do which just start to say things which is a bit like improvising in the world of music. One bad idea, might generate something more interesting down the line. We free associate until we find a thread worth picking up and following. Much of this exchange is useless, but it is a great tool to find the one idea we need. It is a lot of fun and laughs.

IN SITU
FABIENNE LECLERC

MARK DION
SCULPTURES AND INSTALLATIONS





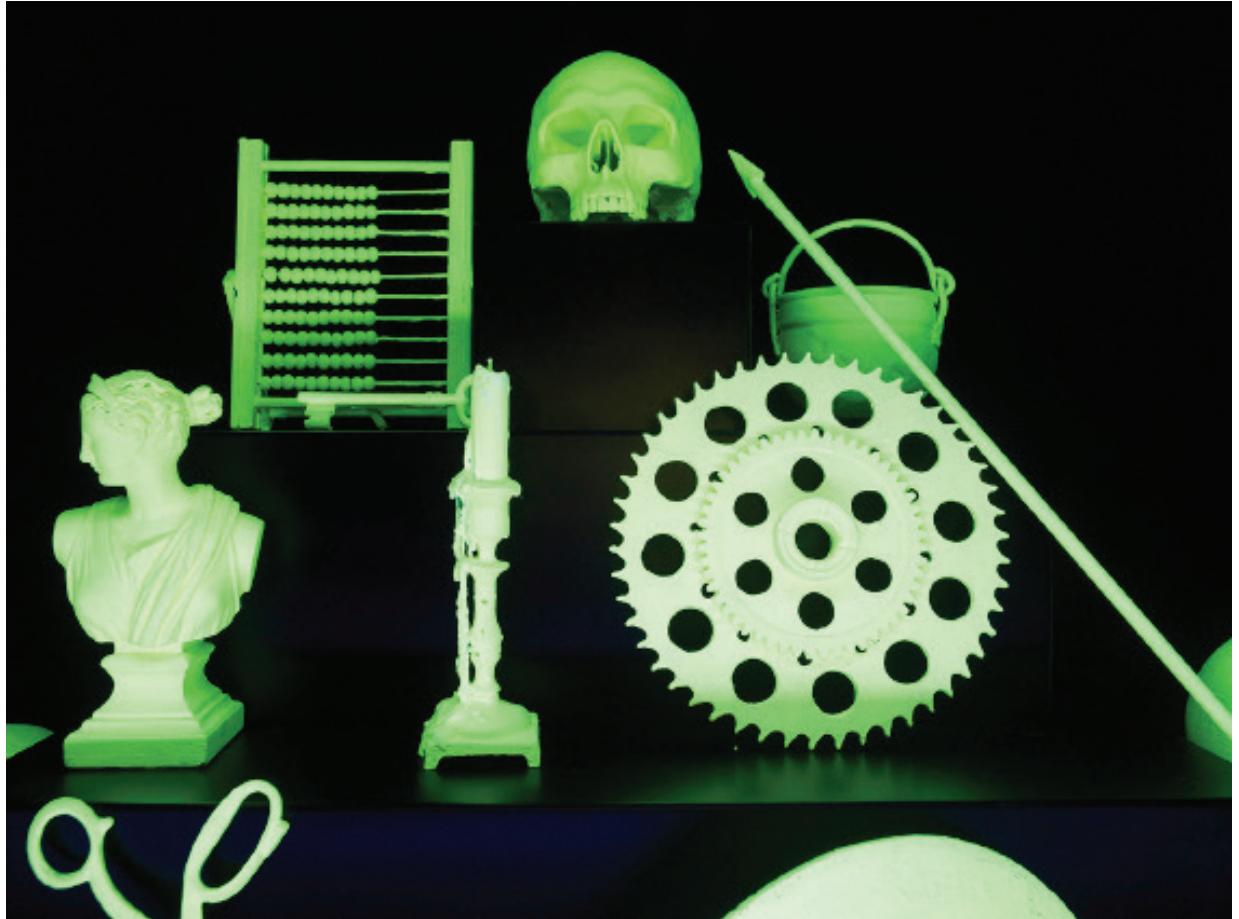
Mark Dion

The Black Box, 2013

Metal and glass cabinet, painted objects, black light

180 x 200 x 70 cm

Unique Piece



Mark Dion

The Black Box, (details inside the cabinet) 2013
Metal and glass cabinet, painted objects, black light
180 x 200 x 70 cm
Unique piece



Mark Dion

Untitled Cabinet, 2011

Wood & glass vitrine, papier maché items

22 x 79 x 120 cm

Unique piece

THE MEDICINE CABINET OF MYSTERY
2013



THE MEDECINE CABINET OF MYSTERY est une nouvelle œuvre produite dans le cadre du projet de Mark Dion « The Macabre Treasury » au Musée Het Domain a Sittard, Pays- Bas. Ce projet est une réflexion sur le phénomène de la collection. Ce travail présente une collection dans son aspect le plus intime et son caractère le plus personnel, à l'échelle domestique. Mark Dion semble vouloir rappeler aux spectateurs que collectionner n'appartient pas qu'au domaine des institutions ou aux plus riches, mais que cela fait partie d'un réflexe humain, toutes échelles confondues.

Ce projet explore les thèmes principaux de la collection- l'importance de collectionner et de cataloguer dans l'enfance, l'interaction entre le naturel et l'artificiel, le rôle de la nostalgie, l'aspect sensuel voire sexuel dans l'impulsion de la collection. De cette façon, Mark Dion interroge également l'importance de collectionner selon la tradition de la sculpture surréaliste. Mark Dion a réalisé un bon nombre d'œuvres qui enquêtent sur le rôle de la Science, des collections et de la nature du mouvement surréaliste, et notamment « The bureau of the Study of Surrealism and it's Legacy » au Musée de Manchester en 2005.

« The Medecine Cabinet of Mystery » fait référence de manière explicite la tradition des Wunderkammern qui tient son origine dans les collections pré-renaissantes, en sens que son approche allégorique donne à chaque objet une valeur symbolique, et représente l'interaction entre le microcosme et le macrocosme. A cet égard, son travail peut également être rattaché au « Dime store alchemy » de Joseph Cornell, cet artiste qui a réalisé à la main des assemblages complexes, sortes de méditations poétiques sur la nature de la mémoire et de la cosmologie. Peut-être que ce travail est un hommage, puisque Mark Dion éprouve une grande affection et du respect pour l'œuvre de Cornell.

Véritable baroudeur des marchés aux puces et des brocantes, Mark Dion est fasciné par la présence du curieux et de la poésie dans la vie quotidienne. Son travail consiste souvent à recontextualiser les objets issus des boutiques d'occasion, qui incarnent les thèmes de la cosmologie, taxonomie et de l'histoire naturelle. Ce travail représente l'insistance de Mark Dion à hybrider les thèmes de la Science, de la Philosophie, de l'Histoire et de la Nature,. De cette manière, il résiste à l'impulsion de diviser l'expérience humaine en catégories distinctes ou par disciplines.



Mark Dion

Medecine cabinet of mysteries, 2013
Small cupboard and mixed objects
70 x 47 x 20 cm
Unique piece



Mark Dion

Packages, 2013

Wood and glass vitrine, mixed packages
190 x 200 x 60 cm
Unique piece

Private collection, South Africa



Mark Dion

Packages, 2013

Wood and glass vitrine, mixed packages
190 x 200 x 60 cm
Unique piece

Private collection, South Africa

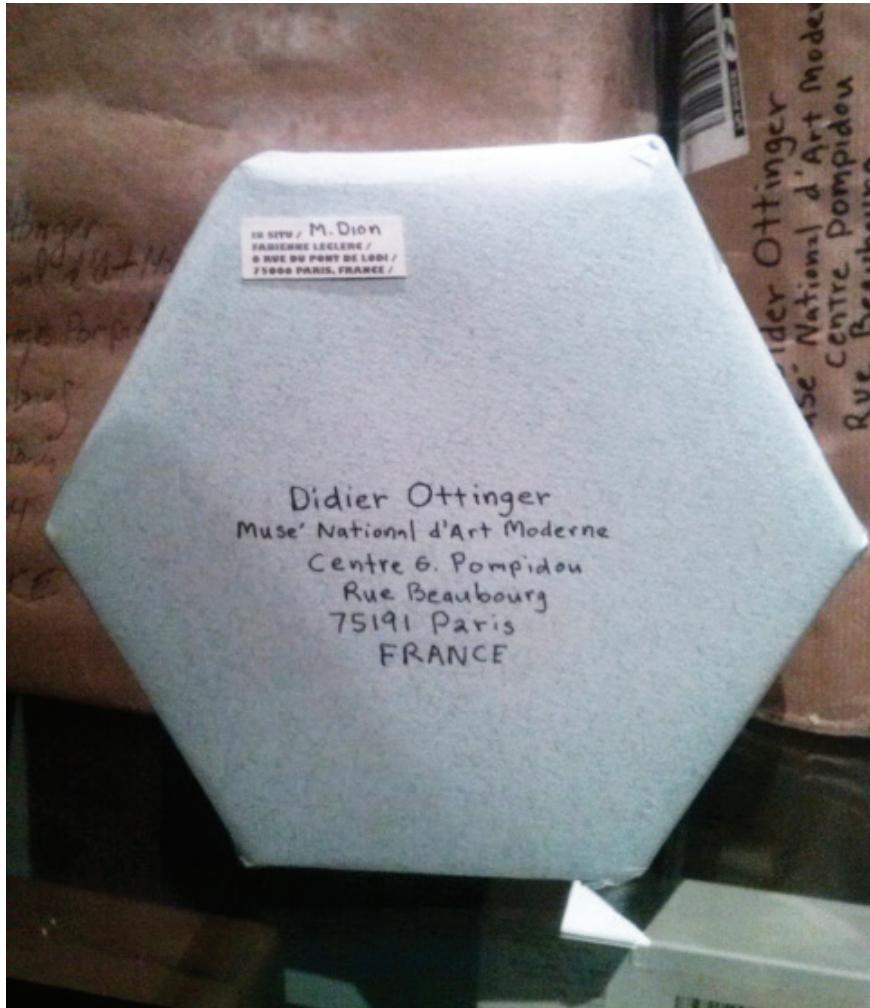


Mark Dion

Packages , 2013

Wood and glass vitrine, mixed packages
190 x 200 x 60 cm
Unique piece

Private collection, South Africa



Mark Dion

Packages, 2013

Exhibition views and details at Pompidou Center «Surréalisme et objets»

Wood and glass vitrine, mixed packages

190 x 200 x 60 cm

Unique piece

Private collection, South Africa



Mark Dion

MMXII Camphor Cinnamomum Camphora Cape Town, 2012

Wood, marquetry, wood bark, text on paper and leaves

Dimensions (when box closed) : 18 x 5,5 x 15,5 cm)

Unique piece

Work presented at the DOCUMENTA 13 (Kassel-Germany/ 2012)



Mark Dion

***The tropical Collectors (Bates, Bruce and Wallace)*, 2009**

Different storage materials, containers, bags, sticks, jars and sand

Variable dimensions

Unique piece

Work presented at the Fiac Hors les murs - la Ménagerie of Natural History Museum october 2012



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Mark Dion

***The Sturgeon*, 2010**

(Alternative view)

Resin, tar, cheap jewellery

Dimensions of the vitrine: L. 157 cm, p. 61,5 cm, h. de 59 cm

Dimensions of the base : L. 155 cm, p. 61 cm, h 71 cm

Unique piece



Mark Dion

***The Sturgeon*, 2010**

(Alternative view)

Resin, tar, cheap jewellery

Dimensions of the vitrine: L. 157 cm, p. 61,5 cm, h. de 59 cm

Dimensions of the base : L. 155 cm, p. 61 cm, h 71 cm

Unique piece



Mark Dion

The Shooting Gallery, 2010

Wood furniture, soft toys, objects in clay and papier maché (birds and rabbits), fabrics, carabine and drawings

L 158,5 cm, p 29 à 37 cm, h 240 cm - without toys.

Unique piece