

THE CABINET OF RENWICK AMBROSE MATHETON

A Thesis

by

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ANDREW MURDOCH

This thesis meets the standards for scope and quality of
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and is hereby approved.

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August 2017

ABSTRACT

This display represents all items archived (to date) in the collection of the late Renwick Ambrose Matheton. A known eccentric and occult enthusiast, Matheton spent his lifetime procuring and cataloging artifacts pertaining to a previously undiscovered civilization - one that seemingly predates the continental schism of Pangaea.¹

Through research, speculation, and the aid of Matheton's coded and cryptic notes, these objects have been identified and categorized to compile this exhibition. Finding the connections between these artifacts became the force driving his every waking moment, some say driving him to madness. Many of the ephemera included in this exhibition are works of his own, attempts to recreate the technologies of these ancients.

But was it madness? With continued analysis of these objects a simple fact becomes increasingly apparent - something sinister lurks in the ancient origins of these artifacts. The further I delve into this research, the more I am beginning to see these connections. For what purpose were these objects destined before they entered Matheton's collection? What connection, if any, exists between these artifacts and Matheton's disappearance?

Ominous warnings aside, please enjoy the assembled ephemera from the collection of Renwick Matheton. Drawing ones own connections is encouraged, but not recommended. Feel free to share your findings.

¹ This is phrased as supposition due to an unidentified property inherent to the artifacts that renders carbon-dating/radiological imaging inconclusive.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to The Crawling Chaos, Nyarlathotep. May his reign be long and insidious.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all professors at TAMUCC that have supported and humored me through the arduous process of becoming a real boy. One day I will repay the favor, creating a series of rage-driven automatons to take care of all tasks requiring the use of rope and/or telepathy.

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I: INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to identify a solitary event as the catalyst for the endeavors wrought to bring this collection before you, dear reader. Instead of determining that series of happenstance occurrences, it seems more succinct to begin where this myriad of artifacts entered the scope of my reality.

Renwick Ambrose Matheton entered my periphery as a benefactor. He would purchase lithographs and etchings here and there, almost always the images that drew the least attention. It seemed that the more ambiguous and dreamlike, and indeed darker, the more likely he was to purchase them. I can only think now that I was, in some way, echoing his research in my work. In some respect I know that I was being led. It was almost as if the knowledge Matheton procured was resonating from him, like some kind of unearthly beacon.

I recall it being Spring, albeit a drier one than is standard, and I found myself at the sale of the estate of one Renwick Ambrose Matheton. At first glance the sale appeared quite unremarkable. The standard over-priced furniture, decorative platters and dust-covered electronics were all in attendance. I was considering a hasty and disappointed departure, particularly after noting that my own works were being sold for far less than their worth, when I noticed a door cracked slightly open. Entering the room I found myself in Matheton's study. Stacks of books and loose papers covered an ornately carved desk. Bookshelves lined the room, the cases built into the wall stretched floor to ceiling. Titles ranged from medical encyclopedias through classic literature, including several speculative writings on the occult.

While perusing the spines of age-weathered books and shuffling through loose pages, yellowed and laden with notation, my hand brushed across something exceedingly cold. Sweeping aside another stack of papers revealed a curious statuette. It bore some resemblance

to a goat but stood on its hind legs, eyes bulging and yellowed, staring balefully forward². Following the creatures gaze I noticed an imperfection in the wall behind the bookcase.

At this juncture I enlisted the aid of one of the sale's volunteers. In roughly an hour we managed to clear the bookshelf of its weight and pull it from the wall. The imperfection I had earlier noted was, in fact, a handle to a sliding panel set into the wall. Without hesitation³ I grabbed the lever and slid the panel aside, revealing the ordered chaos of Matheton's collection.

Gleaming fragments adorned multiple shelves, their surfaces reflecting light through the thick layer of dust. Statuettes of unknowable creatures glared at me, nestled between stacks of yellowed parchment. The humble work-station in the center of the room was cluttered with a peculiar amount of dental instruments, circuit boards, and dead cicadas.

After negotiating with the proprietors of the estate, without the mention of my intentions⁴, I managed to convince them that the secret room was not so secret - merely a discarded storage closet. I procured it (in its entirety) for far less than the mahogany furniture set in the adjoining room. Barring the tedious explanation of how the collection was transported, I assembled a team of researchers and this juncture would be where we begin.

Following is a list of the artifacts on display in this exhibition. These include all objects that have (to date) been cataloged and archived. Matheton's notes have acted as a vague instructional road map, in particular his decoding of the T'Uc Tvlak Tome, a volume he references frequently as being used like a cipher. Many objects require archiving but the constraints of my personal resources, and the fragile psyches of my volunteer researchers, have inhibited progress in a fashion. The nearest contemporary parallel to this process can be seen in Mark Dion's *Tate Thames Dig*. In this sense, an archivist is another type of collector, cataloging

and preserving documents, artifacts, records, etc. Mark Dion's work for the Tate Gallery in London is

2 Figure 1.

3 I might now insist that I felt compelled

4 Another decision contrary to the preservation of my health

an excellent example, combining not only the sorting and classification of archival practice, but also the archaeological excavation that often precedes said practice. In the *Tate Thames Dig* (Fig. 2), Dion and an assembled crew gathered various items from the foreshore of the River Thames.⁵ Dion instructed his team of volunteers to collect 'anything and everything that caught their interest.'⁶ Once excavated, the procured 'specimens' were sorted and classified, cleaned and arranged. These collected, seemingly mundane artifacts took on an entirely new life when placed in their adjusted context. The constructed vitrine to house the items was an immense cabinet, complete with sets of drawers (Fig. 3) each containing different groupings of the collected ephemera. In one dozens of glass stoppers, weathered from their time beneath the river, sit beside rows of buttons of various sizes and types. Fragments of pottery and bottle caps, beads and cans, all reside beside one another restfully, as if they had finally arrived at their destination. Visible behind the French-door style glass cupboards are rows and rows of glass bottles, damaged ceramic and glass drinking vessels (Fig. 4), various metal objects and several bricks (Fig. 5). Each drawer in Dion's re-imagined *Wunderkammer* can be pulled out, revealing further cataloged items, all having somehow made their way into the Thames. An astonishing number of doorknobs fill one drawer while another contains a veritable mountain of keys. Every item can be seen as a relic once attached to a person, and viewers may build their own narrative as to how these objects must have existed before their loss (or intentional discarding into) in the river.

II: ARTIFACTS

I. Not-So-Treasured Memories

⁵ James Putnam, *Art As Artifact: The Museum As Medium* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2001), pp. 40.

⁶ Tate Museum official website: www.tate.org.uk

a.

- i. Green Bunny
- ii. Rabbit with Cargo
- iii. Rabbit Merger
- iv. Witch with Sister
- v. Thirsty Swan
- vi. All Breast Witch
- vii. Platform Bunny
- viii. Rabbit with Interior

b.

- i. Fawn Home Invasion
- ii. Claw Hammer-Head
- iii. Messenger
- iv. Pelican Plumber
- v. Many Childrens Faces Tall
- vi. Baby-face Leg
- vii. Leaning Lady-parts with Foot
- viii. Spike-legged Boy
- ix. Leftover Face
- x. Rabbit-ear Pallet

c.

- i. Bound Appendage
- ii. Screamer Head
- iii. Bound Bird
- iv. Know Your Limits
- v. Manger Baby-skull
- vi. Camel Trophy
- vii. Diorama
- viii. Cup o' Dagon
- ix. Proletariat Residue
- x. Haberdasher's Lament

II. Nightmare Idols

a.

- i. Queen of Rats
- ii. Lord of Bird-rot
- iii. Elder Screamer

- b.**
 - i. Goat - Large of Belly
 - ii. Heart of Lament
 - iii. Elder Dreamer
 - iv. Avian Monolith
 - v. Spawn of Azathoth
 - vi. Goat - Lead of Shins

- c.**
 - i. Amorphous Deity
 - ii. Thought Totem
 - iii. Lady of Sorrow
 - iv. Offering to Memory
 - v. The Devourer
 - vi. Offering to Forget
 - vii. Screamer from Dreamlands
 - viii. Lepus Funeral Urn

III. Architectural Fragments and Idol-Shards

- a.**
 - i. Architectural Fragment I
 - ii. Architectural Fragment II
 - iii. Architectural Fragment III
 - iv. Architectural Fragment IV
 - v. Architectural Fragment V
 - vi. Architectural Fragment VI

- b.**
 - i. Fused Fragments I
 - ii. Fused Fragments II
 - iii. Smaller Puzzle Piece I
 - iv. Smaller Puzzle Piece II
 - v. Smaller Puzzle Piece III
 - vi. Smaller Puzzle Piece IV
 - vii. Smaller Puzzle Piece V
 - viii. Smaller Puzzle Piece VI
 - ix. Smaller Puzzle Piece VII
 - x. Smaller Puzzle Piece VIII
 - xi. Smaller Puzzle Piece IX
 - xii. Smaller Puzzle Piece X
 - xiii. Smaller Puzzle Piece XI
 - xiv. Smaller Puzzle Piece XII
 - xv. Smaller Puzzle Piece XIII
 - xvi. Smaller Puzzle Piece XIV
 - xvii. Smaller Puzzle Piece XV
 - xviii. Smaller Puzzle Piece XVI

- xix. Smaller Puzzle Piece XVII
- xx. Smaller Puzzle Piece XVIII
- xxi. Smaller Puzzle Piece XIX
- xxii. Smaller Puzzle Piece XX
- xxiii. Smaller Puzzle Piece XXI
- xxiv. Smaller Puzzle Piece XXII
- xxv. Smaller Puzzle Piece XXIII
- xxvi. Smaller Puzzle Piece XXIV
- xxvii. Smaller Puzzle Piece XXV
- xxviii. Smaller Puzzle Piece XXVI
- xxix. Smaller Puzzle Piece XXVII

c.

- i. Municipal Diagram I
- ii. Municipal Diagram II
- iii. Municipal Diagram III
- iv. Municipal Diagram IV
- v. Municipal Diagram V
- vi. Municipal Diagram VI
- vii. Municipal Diagram VII
- viii. Municipal Diagram VIII
- ix. Municipal Diagram IX

IV. Miscellany/Small Books/Zoning Maquettes

a.

- i. Wall-Pile I
- ii. Masque with Drawer
- iii. Bobble-crow
- iv. Arrangement with Hand
- v. Finger with Rose and Tendril
- vi. Nest
- vii. Crumpled Note I
- viii. Crumpled Note II
- ix. Candelabra

b. Small Books

- i. 'Field Guide to the Construction of Moth-Based Dwellings'
- ii. ' Encyclopedia of Nails'
- iii. 'Origins of Disdain'
- iv. 'Treatise on the Functions of Snails'
- v. 'Progressive Ennui: A Love Story'
- vi. 'Acceptable Displays of Harvested Organs'
- vii. 'Naturally Occurring Cylinders'
- viii. 'Notable Improvements on the Distribution of Empathy'

- c.
 - i. Hive-pile
 - ii. Zoning Maquette I
 - iii. Zoning Maquette II

V. Workspace and Insect Technologies⁷

i - x.

VI. Miscellany/Machina

- a.
 - i. Preservation of Heart
 - ii. Former Ruler
 - iii. Presumed Handle
 - iv. Possible Framing Square
 - v-xii. Carving Machines
 - xii-xvii. Machine Handles
 - xviii. Tool for Soft Bellies
 - xix. Questionable Function
 - xx. Spined Tuber

- b.
 - i. Carapace on Terrain
 - ii. Calcified Letter to Editor
 - iii. Model of Larger Device
 - iv. Dish-pet

- c.
 - i. Machine I
 - ii. Machine II
 - iii. After Tatlin

VII. Death Masks of the Ever-dying Prince

a-g.

i - xlix.

VIII. Books

- i. 'Mer'Ylseh Vers Codex'
- ii. 'Considered Public Statutes and their Benefactors'
- iii. 'Outgoing Mail and it's Application to Topography'

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IX. Books

⁷ According to his notes, Matheton was attempting to recreate the technologies described in the texts through various experimental methods

- i. 'A Complete Guide to Public Exsanguination'
- ii. 'Architecture for Corpses'
- iii. 'Implied Evolutionary Tendencies of Certain Objects'
- iv. 'A Concise Account of Haberdashery as Pertaining to Longevity'

X. Books

- i. 'Interested Parties and their Whereabouts'
- ii. 'Skin and its Application to Farmland'
- iii. 'Lament of the Foyer and Other Business Models'
- iv. 'Definitive Solutions for Human Crises'
- v. 'The Weight of Decisions When Measured Against Natural Materials'

XI. Machina

a.

Pumpkins

i - iii.

b.

- i. Machine III
- ii. Machine IV
- iii. Balanced Device

XII. Prints

- i. Visitor at the Doorway - lithography
- ii. Conversation with Man in Hat - intaglio and chine-collé
- iii. Discord - lithography
- iv. Nighttime Visitor - lithography
- v. An Inquiry as to the Nature of Things - lithography
- vi. Waiting - lithography
- vii. She Wore a Scarf to Hide Her Face - lithography
- viii. Inhabitant - lithography
- ix. Closed Meeting - lithography
- x. Anticipation - intaglio and chine-collé

III: FINDINGS

The Death-Masks of the Many-Faced Prince

As with much of the data compiled herein, there is a great deal that must be left to conjecture. From deciphered writings one phrase stands out, an epitaph or perhaps a rally cry for this enigmatic deity or ruler:

'May he live and die forever.'

Were these truly the masks of an un-dying yet ever-dying princeling?

Further investigations into certain records and rites (namely those mentioned in the T'Uc Tvlac Tome⁸) indicate that the casting of the princes visage was an annual celebration. The enumerable iterations of the face indicate that he remained virtually unchanged from year to year, with several notable exceptions that seem to correspond with times of war. However implausible, the conclusions drawn by my predecessor indicate that this princeling's yearly face-coverings were not castings but the actual petrified faces discarded from this god-child.

How then the seemingly arbitrary restructuring of the features? Some of the masks appear to have been molded from another entity entirely. What is the significance of the fractured 'masks'? The cyclical grasping at connections seems less futile with each word deciphered, each artifacts purpose expounded upon. I am starting to see the beginnings of a pattern, possibly the same pattern that Ambrose chased so many years before me: the implications of these further discoveries fills me with dread.

⁸ A Codex mentioned in Matheton's notes, one of the few decipherable texts in his reported findings.

Nightmare Idols

This varied grouping of totems seem to be either offerings to or depictions of various creatures/deities in the cultural/religious history of the People. Research assistants have reported strange side-effects that they have come to associate with specific figurines. Similar phenomena have been reported in other collections, particularly among the 'Traveling Museum of the Paranormal and Occult,'⁹ but the intensity and psychological toll of Matheton's Idols is beyond comparison.

Goats (Large Belly/Lead-Shinned) - Several have reported that the goat began appearing in their dreams, which became increasingly vivid and unsettling as proximity/handling of the object continued.

Rat Queen - some reports of scaling of the skin, additionally 'nesting' habits noticed¹⁰

Bird-Headed - auditory hallucinations: sudden and blood-curdling raptor-shrieks

Reclining Figure - sluggishness noted by handlers, specifically the feeling that they were becoming inorganic material or turning 'incrementally to stone.'

Screamers (I,II,III) - Any interactions with the 'screamer' idols seems to result in nightmares. Reports of a muted gray landscape, frequented by solitary masked figures were common. The length of time in the presence of these objects had a direct impact on the intensity of dreams - the figures becoming more aggressive, the length of time spent in this 'grayscale' becoming longer. One researcher, the most dedicated amongst my staff, insisted that the dreams were conveying information and that the figures were trying to tell him some of the secrets to that space. Sadly, this did not end well for the young man. Indeed, the figures were luring him, leading him further down the so-called rabbit-hole. The statuettes appear to represent of those masked grayscale figures: the screamers

⁹ [Paramuseum - Idol of Nightmares](#)

¹⁰ The inspection of an assistants research-station revealed a drawer filled entirely with shredded paper. When questioned, the young lady could not account for 'why' but mentioned only that she felt the 'nest' was of the utmost importance.

are those same figures without their masks.¹¹

Amorphous (I,II,III) - I am of the opinion that these objects are referential to an ever-changing and unknowable deity. My own research has led me to conclude that the objects themselves, however unlikely this may sound, will softly pulse of their own accord.

Architectural Fragments

Matheton believed that these larger, jagged pieces were structural elements to various key buildings in a thriving metropolis. Imagining these shards as parts of dressed masonry stones paints a grandiose picture of a city constructed in the manner of a puzzle. Residual biological markers map their origin to an ancestor of the kudzu vine. The constrictive plant appears to have been instrumental in maintaining the structural integrity of the construction materials.

Puzzle Pieces

Believed to be the fragmented remains of a far larger Nightmare Idol. Its fragmentation seems to have been intentional although Matheton's notes do not indicate whether these pieces were found in this condition or destroyed by his own hand.

Municipal Diagrams

Dioramas for proposed constructions/layouts.

Zoning Maquettes and Hive Pile

Assembled Machina and Insect Technology

Some of Matheton's most intriguing endeavors were his attempts to recreate the theorized technology he gleaned from his research. The melding of nature and science, the merging of insect and circuitry, seemed to be the modern equivalent. Regrettably, I have not been able to activate any of these devices.

Tools

¹¹ The young man was able to report these findings only after a week without exposure to the statuettes and fair amount of medication. His report from the psych-ward was quite thorough and I hope for his speedy recovery.

Though similar in construction, each of these devices seems to have its own highly specialized purpose. The unattached handles of similar make indicate that there were, perhaps, interchangeable tips for the devices.

Carapace

Calcified carapace (in sections - Fig. 8), arranged on slabs found in the same vicinity. Thought to be from a large (now extinct) insect species, kept as pets by the aristocracy. From speculative drawings, these creatures resemble the hybridization of a python, an armadillo and a woolly-bear caterpillar.

Miscellany

Wall-Pile I

Masque with Drawer

Bobble-crow

Arrangement with Hand

Finger with Rose and Tendril

Nest

Crumpled Note I

Crumpled Note II

Candelabra

Not-So-Treasured Memories

These hybridized constructs are reminiscent of the porcelain keepsakes one might find on their grandmother's mantle. Clearly cast from molds, these objects seem to be the product of multiple 'combinations' of separate objects. Somewhat less documented, these conglomerates were the product of one of Matheton's research assistant's endeavors to create new 'artifacts' with

properties similar to the objects in the collection. My own researchers have confirmed that this protégé

of Matheton's was indeed successful. It seemed important to include these items in the exhibition as they provide evidence that the experiment worked. Somehow, be it through science or ritual, this assistant managed to replicate the 'curses' associated with the collection¹², albeit with diminished potency.

Books

The fragility of these tomes is somewhat confounding, considering the weight of the objects. Although the pages vary in thickness from book to book, the material seems to remain consistent. The determined titles of these volumes are largely self-explanatory in regards to content. I shall expound upon them when necessary. Although Matheton's method of procuring this information is veiled, even in his extensive notes, the titles seem to accurately indicate the content of the tomes.

Mer'Ylseh Vers Codex - Referenced frequently in Matheton's notes, this Codex appears to be directly related to his interpretations of the artifacts. This is the largest of the books and its surface is distinctly more colorful and is exceedingly fragile.

Considered Public Statutes and their Benefactors - Indicates a more transparent form of legislation than we the one to which we have become accustomed.

*Outgoing Mail and its Application to Topography*¹³

A Complete Guide to Public Exsanguination

Architecture for Corpses

Implied Evolutionary Tendencies of Certain Objects - Poses a theory that the inanimate will continually develop and change over time. Similarities can be seen in later discussions from Lyall Watson.¹⁴

A Concise Account of Haberdashery as Pertaining to Longevity

Interested Parties and their Whereabouts

12 Effects mentioned above in regards to the 'nightmare idols'

13 Figure 2.

14 'The Secret Life of Inanimate Objects'

Skin and its Application to Farmland - Describes certain agricultural methods in which skin, human or otherwise, is used in the fashion that black mesh 'weed barrier' is used today.

Lament of the Foyer and Other Business Models - In this text, one of the most prolific architects of this civilization outlines his/her outright disdain for the entryway.

Definitive Solutions for Human Crises - The use of the word 'human' is likely an accommodation for language difference on Matheton's part. The text discusses various methods for dealing with what we would today refer to as existential crises.

The Weight of Decisions When Measured Against Natural Materials - This volume is largely a treatise on the cause and effect of ones actions. It reads as a cautionary tale, insinuating that those behaving without thought would become raw material. The details of the process are hinted at but not discussed in depth.

Small Books

Field Guide to the Construction of Moth-Based Dwellings

Encyclopedia of Nails

Origins of Disdain

Treatise on the Functions of Snails

Progressive Ennui: A Love Story

Acceptable Displays of Harvested Organs - A short guide for shop-owners from the governing body, describing arrangements considered aesthetically permissible for the consumer.

Naturally Occurring Cylinders

Notable Improvements on the Distribution of Empathy

IV: DISPLAY

Since Matheton's own system of display was clearly not for public consumption, it stood to reason that the collection be archived and presented in a different manner. When confronted with this problem, the solution presented itself without hesitation: the *Wunderkammer*. What better way to assemble these artifacts and oddities than in the tradition of the cabinet of curiosities?

Following this vein of display lends certain issues to an exhibition. How does one categorize such a varied collection of objects? Drawing once more from the 'curio-cabinet', the groupings of artifacts were assembled in the fashion that made the most sense to the curator. In this instance, I chose¹⁵ to let the objects curate themselves. Assembling this collection was largely based on feeling – I could indeed feel the pull of certain artifacts towards one another and repulsion from others. A sort of insidious magnetism, almost an 'insistence on merging' became apparent whilst I shuffled these relics about their shelves. The resultant configuration almost assembled itself, although certainly drew from an existing model.

The curatorial aesthetic imposed on the objects and artworks of the private collection are as varied as the interests of the individual collector. This is particularly apparent in the *Wunderkammer*, or the 'cabinet of curiosities', as it came to be known. During the seventeenth-century, when the world was still full of wonder and mystery, emerged collectors whose procurements were not limited in scope: any object, artifact, painting, or anatomical oddity that struck beyond the norm of their continental normalcy would be worthy of display. As such, the eclectic gatherings of 'things' would be arranged in accordance with whatever categorical methods made sense to the collector.

"One typical *Wunderkammer* contained, among other things, musical instruments, fossils, ethnographic objects, weapons, books, and paintings; another included exhibits of human

and animal life, such as a man with only two fingers on

¹⁵ I use the term loosely. I am unsure that I actually had any option in the matter.

each hand...One Italian collection had two forms of display: first, items of similar appearance were alternated; second, groups of similar items were arranged together. This sounds like a rational method, but since the display included artworks, clocks, mirrors, animals, and rocks..."¹⁶

The most common thread woven between notable collectors throughout the centuries is their intimate and personal relationship with the inanimate. Each collection bears the mark of its creator in the arrangement and presentation of its parts. Take for example the collection of Isabella Stewart Gardner, now falling under the category of the 'collector's museum', opened to public viewing in 1903.¹⁷ Gardner's collection varies widely including decorative trays from India, various etchings and oil paintings from all over Europe, a Tibetan hand prayer wheel, and various jade figurines from China, to name a few. The most intriguing aspect of the collection is the manner in which Gardner assembled the art-objects she had amassed. Her intuitive curatorial style yielded new compositions, assemblages that become more than the sum of their individual parts and can be considered artworks themselves. This is nearly premonitory of works to come

later in the twentieth-century, utilizing the juxtaposition of seemingly disparate items to complete a composition. She has accomplished this, however, using works completed by other artists and objects she collected. Of note is the Titian Room in the Gardner museum, named for Titian's painting *Rape of Europa* (Fig. 9), purchased in 1896,¹⁸ which hangs center-wall above a meticulously arranged pair of ornate tables, between which sits a gilded armchair. Each of the tables is topped with its own arrangement and on the opposite end of each table, ornate candle-holders depicting angles frame the

spread. Isabella wrote to her agent on the painting's arrival: "I am drinking myself drunk with Europa

¹⁶ David Carrier, "The Display of Art: An Historical Perspective", *Leonardo*, Vol. 20, No.1 (1987), pp.83.

¹⁷ Dario Gamboni, "The art of keeping art together: On collectors' museums and their preservation", *RES* 52 (Autumn 2007), p.181.

¹⁸ From the museum's official website: http://www.gardnermuseum.org/collection/artwork/3rd_floor/titian_room

and then sitting for hours... thinking and dreaming about her. Every inch of paint in the picture seems full of joy.”¹⁹ This is one of many examples to be found in Gardner's former home, a three-story house with every room containing portions of her collection. The entirety of her collection is an example of how archived objects serve as an extension of self, and in turn an instance in which the collector has impressed their own essence into their collection. That intangible aspect will be present, consciously or not, even when the objects come under new ownership. For would the scene not be lacking with one of its parts removed? If the bronze figure shown laying on its side on the left table (Fig. 1) were taken from its compatriots, the assembled objects would be lacking. One might get the feeling that those remaining assembled would mourn its loss.²⁰

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Overall feeling and idea inferred from Lyall Watson, *The Nature of Things: The Secret Life of Inanimate Objects* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990).

V: CONCLUSIONS

In the afterglow of the well-received exhibition, a creeping fear enters my mind. Why would I have permitted these items to follow their purchasers out into the world? Although some of the artifacts with more overtly negative effects were excluded (some even removed after the shows installation) scores left the shelves in the hands of attendees.

Although the viewers²¹ seemed to receive this display with relative enthusiasm, I feel they were perhaps less than informed. In part my conscience feels this weight but another portion of my psyche is exhilarated. Now out in the world, how may more effects of these objects may be viewed outside of the control environment? Beads of sweat form on my brow as I write these words. Of particular concern are the goats, both of which left the exhibition in the hands of ill informed patrons. During the course of my research dreams of the goats were ongoing, appearing in the evening thoughts of countless assistants. For those who endured longer exposure to these statuettes personality changes could be noted, the individuals becoming distant and paranoid.

Half of my psyche screams to be rid of the collection, all sensible thoughts lean to this conclusion. The rest of me, however, cannot part with these objects. They are a part of me now. I must, no I *need* to know. The patterns are there, they have a *purpose*. If I could just unlock them, solve the puzzle... but there are pieces missing. Some pieces of myself seem to be missing. Soon they will fall into place...

²¹ Perhaps 'participants' at this juncture would be more accurate.



Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.



Figure 5.



Figure 6.



Figure 7.



Figure 8.

-James Putnam, *Art As Artifact: The Museum As Medium* (New York: Thames & Hudson, (2001), pp. 40.

-Tate Museum official website: www.tate.org.uk

[-Paramuseum - Idol of Nightmares](#)

-Lyall Watson, *The Nature of Things: The Secret Life of Inanimate Objects* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990).

-David Carrier, "The Display of Art: An Historical Perspective", *Leonardo*, Vol. 20, No.1 (1987), pp.83.

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