




Fall 2017

Wonders of Nature and Artifice

Schmucker Art Gallery
Gettysburg College

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Wonders of Nature and Artifice

Description

A stuffed blowfish, a meticulously-drawn insect, a ravishing lily, and a rhinoceros horn carved with scenes of plants and animals—these were among the wonders of nature and artifice, the marvels that fueled the Renaissance quest for knowledge. This exhibition explores the intellectual and aesthetic motivations of Renaissance naturalists and collectors, whose wonders of nature and artifice were displayed in elaborate gardens, illustrated books, and remarkable cabinets of curiosities. Collectors were driven by curiosity and a sense of wonder about what seemed to be an ever-expanding world. Students from Prof. Felicia Else's upper-level art history course and Kay Etheridge's First Year Seminar will draw connections between art and science, and curate a Renaissance-inspired "Chamber of Wonders" in Schmucker Art Gallery with resources from Gettysburg College's Fine Arts and Special Collections, departments across campus, and individual loans. [More information](#)

Keywords

Renaissance, Chamber of Wonders, science, knowledge, curiosity cabinets

Disciplines

Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque Art and Architecture | Fine Arts | History of Science, Technology, and Medicine | Intellectual History | Interdisciplinary Arts and Media

Publisher

Schmucker Art Gallery, Gettysburg College

Comments

This tri-fold pamphlet was produced for the exhibit "Wonders of Nature and Artifice," which was displayed in Schmucker Art Gallery from November 10 to December 8 2017.

We are pleased to welcome you to *Wonders of Nature and Artifice*, a Renaissance-inspired “Chamber of Wonders” curated by students from the First Year Seminar, “Exploration of the Marvelous: Art and Science in the Renaissance” and the Art History and Interdisciplinary Studies Course “Wonders of Nature and Artifice: The Renaissance Quest for Knowledge.” In the courses and exhibition, students have learned about the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge and the powerful dynamics behind scientific discovery and societal forces.

The students took as their starting point the Curiosity Cabinets and Chambers of Wonders from the days of the Renaissance. Such collections featured an astounding variety of works of nature and artifice, juxtaposed in ways we no longer see today. The bounty of famed collections like that of Ferrante Imperato or Archduke Albert of Flanders included crocodiles, marble statuettes, corals and shells, globes, exquisite paintings, monkeys, marvelous flowers, unusual clocks, birds, precious gems, skeletons and books. The Renaissance, known as a rebirth of Classical Antiquity, was also an age of global exploration, and collectors were driven by curiosity and a sense of wonder about what seemed to be an ever-expanding world.

In this same spirit, our students have brought together Gettysburg College’s own wonders of nature and artifice, some specially loaned by faculty, alumni, trustees and even the students themselves. Here, you will see an equally dynamic range of scientific specimens, odd artifacts and works of artistic ingenuity, including elaborate fossils from millions of years past, a 16th-century musical manuscript, beautifully mounted butterflies, a 17th-century Ming plate, the fearsome skull of an alligator, and an Ethiopian magical scroll with hand-painted images on goat vellum.

Bridging the gap between the Renaissance and our own time was quite a challenge, but the students rose to the occasion marvelously. Each student carried out research on an object or set of objects of their choice and took charge of displaying them in this marvelous and diverse installation. More information on their work can be found on <http://wonder-cabinet.sites.gettysburg.edu/2017>.

We hope you will enjoy the “wonders” of our own quest for knowledge and consider the richness of bringing together the different branches of human knowledge in the context of a liberal arts education.

This endeavor was made possible by the generosity and support of many people across campus and beyond. We would like to give special thanks to Shannon Egan, Carolyn Sautter, Mary Wootton, Sydney Gush, Molly Reynolds, Eric Remy, Carrie Szarko, St. John Smith, R.C. Miessler, Rachel Lesser, and William O’Hara. Items were generously loaned to the exhibition from Ron Fuchs, Director of the Reeves Collection at Washington and Lee University, Bruce Stefany, Michael Hobor, Charlie Emmons, Kazuo Hiraizumi, Jack Ryan, the Biology Department, the Environmental Studies Program with particular thanks to Sarah Principato, Special Collections & College Archives, Musselman Library, and the Schmucker Art Gallery, Gettysburg College. We would like to gratefully acknowledge funding from Steve Mahinka, the Johnson Center for Creative Teaching and Learning, EPACC, the Office of the Provost, the Schmucker Art Gallery, and the Art and Art History Department, Gettysburg College.

Felicia Else, Associate Professor, Department of Art and Art History
Kay Etheridge, Professor, Biology Department



Wonders of Nature and Artifice

Curated by students under the direction of Prof. Felicia Else, Department of Art and Art History, and Prof. Kay Etheridge, Department of Biology

November 10 - December 8, 2017

RECEPTION:

November 10, 4:30 - 6:30 pm

LUNCHTIME GALLERY TALKS:

November 15, November 29, December 6,
noon - 1 pm

Wonders — of — Nature and Artifice

RITRATTO DEL MUSEO DI
FERRANTE IMPERATO

Gettysburg
COLLEGE
Schmucker Art Gallery

300 North Washington Street
Schmucker Hall
Gettysburg, PA 17325-1485

IMAGE: Ferrante Imperato,
Dell'Historia Naturale, Naples,
1599, engraving

Gettysburg
COLLEGE
Schmucker Art Gallery



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1. Ethiopian Magic Healing Scroll (detail)
ink on vellum
eighteenth century
4.875 x 78.5 in.
On loan from Michael "Mike" Hobor '69

2. Polished Ammonite Fossil Half
Desmoceras latodorsatum
Tular, Madagas
Middle Cretaceous, Albian Stage, approximately 112 million years ago
6 x 5 in.
On loan from Professor Kazuo Hiraizumi

3. Antiphon
ink on vellum
sixteenth century
14.5 x 19.75 in.
On loan from Bruce R. Stefany '71 and Betsy A. Stefany

4. Alligator Skull
9 x 17 in.
Collection of the Biology Department, Gettysburg College

5. Fish Fossil Plate
Lycoptera davidi
Yixian Formation, Liaoning Province, China
Late Cretaceous, approximately 100.5 to 66 million years ago
20.5 x 13 in.
On loan from Professor Kazuo Hiraizumi

6. Prehnite
mineral
4 x 6.5 in.
John J. Shank '21 Collection, Environmental Studies, Gettysburg College

7. Chinese carved Ivory Puzzle Ball
ivory
1800-1911
5 in. diameter
Special Collections and College Archives, Musselman Library, Gettysburg College

8. Copy of Guido Reni's *Aurora* (detail)
oil on canvas
55 x 97 cm
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Jeremiah Zimmerman, Special Collections and College Archives, Musselman Library, Gettysburg College

9. Ming Dynasty Plate (detail)
hard-paste porcelain
1575-1620
7.75 in. diameter
Gift of Joyce P. Bishop in honor of her daughter Kimberly Bishop Connors, '92. On loan from Reeves Collection Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia

10. Quartz Crystal
9 x 9 in.
John J. Shank '21 Collection, Environmental Studies, Gettysburg College