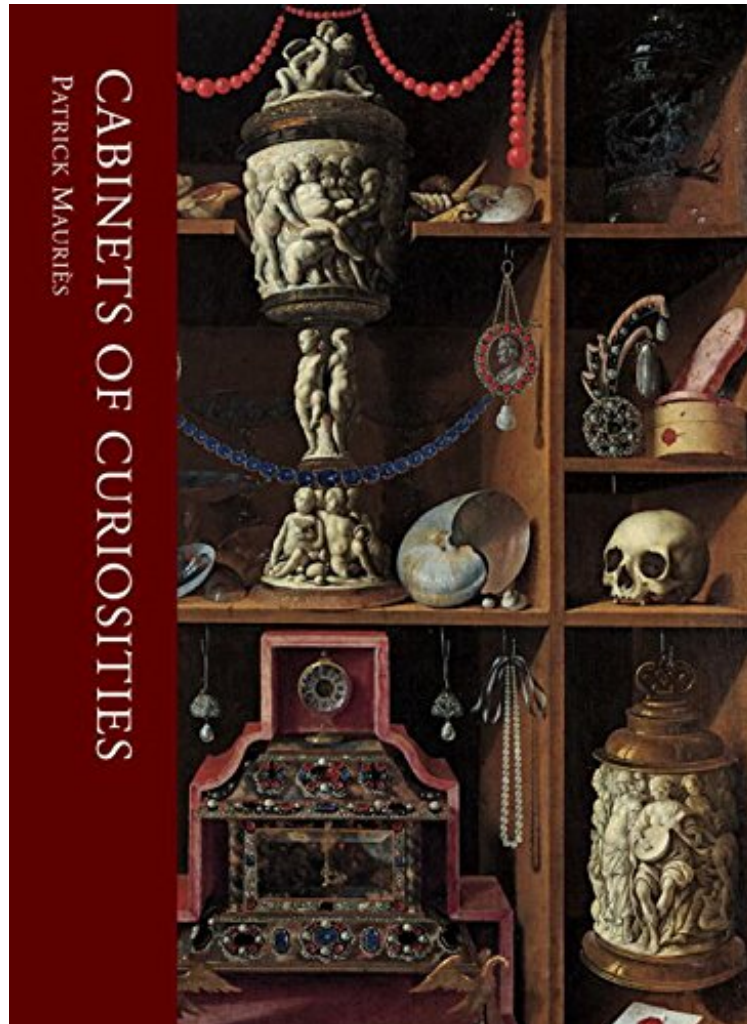


Cabinets of Curiosities

Patrick Mauris

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and plants, work in precious metals, clocks, scientific instruments, celestial globes . . . all knowledge, the whole cosmos arranged on shelves. Such were the cabinets of curiosities of the seventeenth century, the last period of history when man could aspire to know everything. Who were the collectors? They were archdukes and kings—the Emperor Rudolf II was the prince of all collectors—rich merchants and scholars, and their collections ranged from a single crowded room to whole palatial suites. Patrick Maurie`s traces the amazing history of these rooms of wonders in this ingeniously erudite survey. Not many of the rooms survive, though there are pictorial records, but their contents still exist and are among the treasures of museums all over the world. 139 full-color and 133 black-and-white illustrations

From Library Journal
In this sumptuously illustrated volume, Mauries (Jean Cocteau) presents the long history of cabinets of curiosities—grand accumulations of rare, exotic, or unusual objects either natural or human-made, displayed in decorative cases or entire rooms. The earliest documented case, from late 15th-century Italy, was a collection of books as well as a variety of botanical and zoological specimens (including a stuffed crocodile). Collections have also included textiles, scientific and musical instruments, ethnographic objects, automata, paintings, silverware, and mummified anatomical specimens. That the fascination with collecting—as well as with organizing these collections in some artistic fashion—has continued through the centuries is evident in the "shadow boxes" by 20th-century artists such as Joseph Cornell. In many ways, this book is a cabinet of curiosities in itself—crammed with fascinating images and information. While the images are the book's strength (the author is affiliated with the beautifully illustrated Italian journal *FMR*), some are used as background to the text, thereby either obscuring or being obscured by the printed page. Even worse, some lack captions or have captions that are erroneous. In addition, the book suffers from not having an adequate index or a glossary to help with the many foreign and esoteric terms used. Although the book is fun to browse through, it shouldn't be considered a necessary purchase.
Margaret Gross, Chicago P.L. Copyright 2002
Reed Business Information, Inc. Packed with so many images it will appeal to art libraries as well, but is recommended here for its special interest to collections appealing to collectors of oddities. - The Midwest Book
Mauris tour of strange objects is entertaining and fascinating. His chapters . . . reflect a deeply intellectual appreciation. - Antiques The Arts Weekly
[This book] is an entertaining read with hundreds of images of both the collectibles and the elaborate presentations fashioned for them during the great age of collecting. - The Bloomsbury
About the Author
Patrick Maurie`s is a writer and publisher of many notable titles on fashion and design, including *Flora, Fauna, Jewelry by Chanel*, and *Maison Goosens*.