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COLLECTING THE WORLD, COLLECTING THE SELF

The Worldview of the Wunderkammer

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THESES

- (1) The visuality of Renaissance curiosity cabinets resonates with contemporary aesthetic sensibilities. It plays a significant role in both art and everyday, private practices of collecting.
- (2) Gábor Gerhes' *ATLAS* is a good example of the collecting trend in contemporary art. Placing the collection at the intersection of art, knowledge, and subjectivity, it is the continuation of a long-standing tradition of modernity.
- (3) By sparking an interest in the objective world, early modern collections contributed in a big way towards the emergence of modern natural science. They, however, it must be observed, played a no less vital part in the birth and dissemination of new forms of subjectivity and individuality. Early modern collectors were, in this respect, agents of a general cultural transformation.
- (4) There was, during the 16th century, a vibrant dialogue between all sorts of physical (material, visual, textual) collections and the mental structures of *ars memoriae*, leading to the separation from each other of the categories of objective knowledge and subjective memories. The metaphors of the art of memory have influenced our modern understanding of personal identity in both a mediate and an immediate way.
- (5) Collecting, as a cultural strategy, has retained into the 20th century, and beyond, its quality of being an intermediary between the spheres of objectivity and subjectivity, and, as such, continues to offer a viable option for epistemological considerations.